
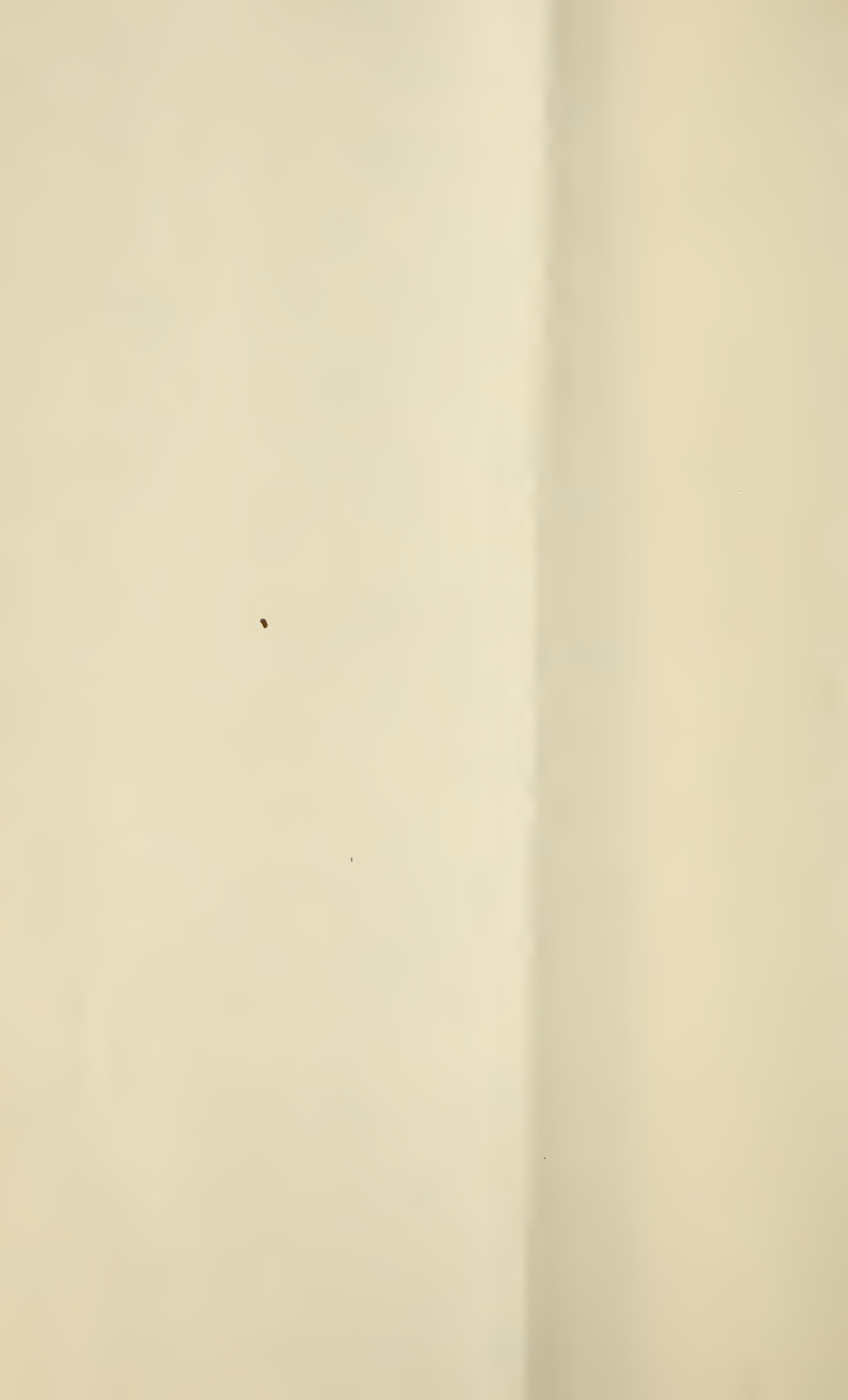


LETTERS OF
HARRIET
DUCHESS
OF
SERMONETA

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**THE LETTERS OF HARRIET,
DUCHESS OF SERMONETA**



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HARRIET, DUCHESS OF SERMONETA.

Frontispiece.

LETTERS OF HARRIET
DUCHESS OF SERMONETA
TO MISS DENISON

1862—1905

WITH PORTRAITS

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PREFACE

THIS small volume of the letters of Harriet, Duchess of Sermoneta, is merely the record of a lifelong friendship, the letters making no claim either to importance in their subject-matter or to being of general interest, yet the Duchess possessed the art, in an eminent degree, of giving lifelike and vivid descriptions of the ordinary occurrences of her immediate surroundings, and her letters give a charming insight into many details of Italian life and show the impression they produced upon an English mind.

It is thought, therefore, that it will give pleasure to the ever-narrowing circle of her relations and friends, that these letters should be preserved and privately printed.

In these days of telephone and telegrams, few people have the time, or take the trouble, to write anything beyond the barest facts of their doings and business, and letters, therefore,

of a past generation who took pains to write agreeably and well are getting more and more precious and worthy of a place in the family library.

The Hon. Harriet Georgina Ellis, who was born in 1831, was the eldest daughter of the sixth Lord Howard de Walden, and her mother was the youngest daughter of the fourth Duke of Portland.

Lord Howard de Walden was for many years English Minister at Brussels, remaining there until his death in the autumn of 1868 ; and previously to going to Belgium he was at Lisbon, so that the chief part of Miss Ellis's early life was spent out of England. When she grew up, she frequently came to pass the winter with her uncle and aunt, Mr. and Lady Charlotte Denison, at Ossington, in Nottinghamshire, and at the Speaker's House, Westminster (after Mr. Denison became Speaker of the House of Commons), returning to Belgium for the summer ; and when the Belgian home was broken up at Lord Howard's death, her time was mostly spent, either at Ossington or in Northumberland, with her brother, the Hon. William Ellis, who was rector of Bothal, near Morpeth, or else travel-

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ling on the Continent with her aunt, Lady Harriet Bentinck. Growing tired of this wandering life without any settled home, she made up her mind, in 1874, to take a small flat in Florence. She had not, however, been established there many months before she married, in 1875, the Duke of Sermoneta, with whom she had become intimate the previous winter in Rome.

Michel Angelo Caetani, Duke of Sermoneta, was born in 1804, and was therefore past seventy when he married Miss Ellis, and some years previously he had become totally blind.

He had been married twice before—his first wife, Countess Rzewuska, who died young, was the mother of the present Duke of Sermoneta and of Countess Lovatelli—of both of whom frequent mention is made in the letters. The Duke's second wife was Miss Knight, who died in 1872, leaving him in his blindness very forlorn and lonely. Miss Ellis, also, was lonely, and felt her life an objectless one, and she threw herself heart and soul into devoting herself to her husband, and making his life brighter, in which she was thoroughly successful, and their married life, as long as it lasted, was a very happy one.

The Duke was a very interesting and distinguished man and, had he not been handicapped by his blindness, would no doubt have taken a more leading part in public affairs. More liberal in his views than most of the Roman princes, and desiring to see a more enlightened Government established at Rome, he took, in 1870, the result of the plebiscite to King Victor Emmanuel at Florence, thereby being instrumental in bringing the King of Italy to Rome. For this he was excommunicated by Pope Pius IX., but the sentence was cancelled by his successor, through the intervention of Cardinal di Pietro.

The Duke had a great reputation for his extraordinary knowledge and understanding of Dante. He wrote many explanatory letters and articles on the subject, and could recite whole cantos by heart. At Florence he was in the habit of collecting a few sympathetic friends together and reciting a canto to them, explaining the difficult passages as he went along.

Although the chief home of the Sermonetas was in the Palazzo Caetani at Rome, they made a practice of frequently coming to spend a few weeks at Florence, and as time went on,

finding the apartment taken by Miss Ellis in 1874 too small, they moved, in 1877, to the Palazzo Mozzi, on the south side of the River Arno, which had a beautiful terraced garden at the back, extending up the hill as far as the old walls of Florence. The proprietor, Count Mozzi, was bankrupt, and in 1880 the palace was sold by his creditors to a German lady, widow of Prince Carolath, over the heads of the Sermonetas, who still continued to inhabit the upper floor as her tenants—an arrangement which led to a good deal of trouble later on.

In 1881 the Duke of Sermoneta's health began to fail, and there is a considerable gap in the letters. All through 1882 he was frequently ill, and died in December of that year.

The Duchess left Rome at once and never went back to live there, and Florence became her permanent home. Difficulties arose with the Duke's son and, after a time, a lawsuit was instituted to settle the dispute—which dragged out its weary length for some years, being carried from court to court—but a settlement was at last arrived at in 1889.

In December, 1886, the Duchess had moved

to the Palazzo Tolomei Via dei Serragli, where she stayed for some years, and then went to live at the Palazzo Guadagni, on the other side of the river, near the Cascine, which she occupied until her death, which took place in the spring of 1906.

In the last ten or twelve years of the Duchess's life there are frequent and long gaps in the correspondence. She was in the habit of coming to England every summer for some months, and two winters were spent in Egypt.

The great interest of her life, when at Florence, was in establishing a Dante Society in memory of her husband, and in collecting and printing various articles and letters that he had written on Dante and other subjects to learned men, notably to Conte Carlo Troja, Comte de Circourt, Mr. Edward Cheney, M. Taine, etc.

The Grand Duke of Saxe-Weimar was a friend and correspondent of the Duke of Sermoneta during many years—and an account is given in the letters of a visit that the Duchess paid him at the Wartburg, which was a great interest and gratification to her.

Her energy never flagged until attacked by

illness in the autumn of 1904. Her complaint was not considered a mortal one, but, weakened by long suffering, she succumbed to an attack of pneumonia in April, 1906.

These few facts and dates seem sufficient to explain the letters which are so graphic and characteristic, that they tell their own story far better than anyone else could do, and it, therefore, appears needless to add more in the way of introduction.

LOUISA EVELYN DENISON.

February, 1912.

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LETTERS OF HARRIET, DUCHESS OF SERMONETA

BOTHAL CASTLE,
February 4, 1862.

MY DEAR LOUISA,

You must not think I had forgotten my promise of writing to you, though your letter arrived this morning before mine was begun, but as I had promised you a view of the castle I had to wait till I could make you a little sketch of it, and that I was not able to do before yesterday, as since we have been here we have been out all day with Willy,* either exploring or making acquaintance with his parishioners and the farmers. The parish is twelve or thirteen miles long, so that takes a great deal of time, and we

* The Hon. and Rev. William Ellis had recently been given the living of Bothal, near Morpeth, by the Duke of Portland.

generally go out directly after breakfast, and then after lunch again till dark. The evenings are the only time I have to write much in, and then, you see, it was impossible to take an outside view of the castle. This will give you a very fair idea of it from the garden: The tower and the part to the right of the picture are the old gateway of the original castle; that to the left was added on by a Goth (the agent's father) in barbarous taste—regular watering-place style. The square window at the top is my bedroom, and commands a charming view of wooded banks and winding river. The walls are 6 feet thick, which makes the rooms rather dark; the tower contains a charming winding staircase which leads up to the flagstaff and down to the dungeon (where we keep the beer and the meat). The only objection to the castle that we have found yet is that the chimneys do smoke on windy days, but that is easily prevented by not lighting the fires, and there is generally one room that don't smoke. The dining-room has a fine Rembrandty effect, with its little windows and deep recesses, but it is rather dark when there is no sun—indeed, one can hardly see then to read or write in

it. I have begun one or two views of it, but have not had time to do much to them.

The country about is charming and the air delicious. There is a lovely glen with a river running through it, which goes four miles to Morpeth and about five or six to the sea, I believe. There is a footpath by the side of the river, and we explored part of it on Saturday. It was pouring with rain and, as you may imagine, uncommonly wet, but we could not resist going on, every turn was so pretty. The woods are full of ferns, and little cascades come leaping down to the river; it must be lovely in summer. The air is splendid. When you get to the top of the banks you can see the sea, which is about six miles off, and from Earsdon Mill, which is near the boundaries of the parish, you can see the Cheviots and Simonside Hills. There is an old tower, which is now a farm, called Cockle Park Tower, which you can just see from the top of our tower. In former days the Lords of Bothal used to keep a lookout there, and when any unwary travellers were seen approaching a signal was made, and the Lords of Bothal would sally forth and fall on the unwary travellers. It is very high and

in a very exposed situation, but the view is grand. We climbed up it to-day, and you can see seven castles, any amount of sea, and the Cheviots and Simonside. Their tops were covered with snow to-day. If ever I have to set up a home of my own Cockle Park Tower is the place I should covet, though it would want a deal of putting to rights. A farmer lives there now—we are making acquaintance with all the farmers about here and their wives. We like them very much ; they are a rough outspoken set, but very friendly, and so pleased to see us. We find an engraving of my grandfather in almost every house, and it feels like coming among one's own people. It is rather difficult to understand their north-country accent sometimes, but we are getting to do so, and their quaint expressions amuse us very much.

Pussy sends her love ; her Grand Duc burst from overeating, and has been skinned in order to be stuffed. The monkeys are quite well. Willy begs to be remembered to you. I shall soon, I hope, have a few more vignettes to send you, so I hope you will write soon to merit them. You know we

shall always, both of us, be glad to hear of you, and believe me,

Very affectionately yours,

HARRIET G. ELLIS.

LAUSANNE,
SUNDAY, *July 12*, 1863.

I was glad to hear that you were safely arrived in London, and I hope that your little end of the season will be a pleasant one. I was particularly interested by your account of the ball for the Prince and Princess of Wales, and your news about Minny's* going off to the Cape of Good Hope was very nearly being my first intelligence of the event.

I heard from Papa, yesterday, that we really have to leave our house and get another, and we shall be obliged to go direct to our country home, as there is literally no place to receive us in at Brussels. Fancy how tiresome, having to change after being in the same house more than seventeen years.

I think we shall be glad to get home again, even under these circumstances; and, after all, I am so little at Brussels that to me the

* Hon. Charles Ellis.

change matters less than to anybody else in the family. And I think I shall often regret the beautiful sky and blue hills of Italy. I quite agree with you in thinking Genoa the most beautiful town I ever saw, and the pictures in some of the galleries are beautiful. We staid a week at Genoa to dry Aunt Harriet's things;* ours, luckily, were not on the carriage, so they escaped, and, to tell you the truth, I don't think any of hers were worth serious regrets. Her luggage consists chiefly of old clothes and stockings. I think she has 160 pairs of stockings and sixty of kneecaps—at least, so we were told. The most serious loss was that of her books, which had all been just bound at Rome, and are pretty nearly ruined, both inside and outside, by the salt water first, and subsequent washings in fresh. We had to stop a week at Milan in order to get the carriage mended, and last Monday, July 6, we started on our journey again. We went by train to Arona, and then by boat to Baveno, stopping to see Isola Bella on our way. We had enchanting weather after we

* Lady Harriet Bentinck, whose travelling carriage, when being put on board the steamer at Leghorn, fell into the sea.

left Genoa and Milan, where we were nearly frizzled with the heat. I saw your names at the Hotel de la Poste at Baveno. Then we came on to Isella the next day, where we had to sleep, to Aunt Har's intense indignation, because she had stopped at Isella forty-two years ago, and it was a horrid dirty little inn, and they got nothing to eat there, and those who went to bed were eaten up by bugs, and those who didn't had to sit up all night on chairs. We tried to persuade her that it might have improved since she was there forty-two years ago, but in vain; directly we got into the place (which looked, I must say, extremely clean) she declared she was sure it was just the same as ever, and the bed full of bugs, so we left her to discuss the bugs with Tyrell, and I went out and did a sketch, for it is a lovely place. We got a capital dinner, and, after all, the only descendants of the forty-two generations of bugs were found in my bed, where I captured two. The next day we got as far as Brieg. We stopped at the Hospice on the Simplon to see the dogs, and one of the priests brought us out a most lovely puppy with blue eyes, just a month old—the

most engaging creature I ever saw. We were enchanted with the Simplon; the whole mountain side was covered with pink alpine roses in full blossom and myriads of wild flowers. The weather clouded over, and looked very threatening just as we got to the top; but I think it only added to the grandeur of the scene. Next day we came on to Sion, where we slept, and on by train to Lausanne the day after. To-morrow we go to Chillon, and the day after we start for home. Pussy* and I are thinking of going on to Strasburg at once, leaving Aunt Harriet at Basle, and the next day to Luxemburg, and then to Namur, and so home.

SPEAKER'S HOUSE,
WESTMINSTER,
February, 1866.

I wish you would tell me before I go back to Belgium where you get the bread-plates ready for carving, as I think it would be rather nice to take one or two back for Claire d'Yve and Suzanne de Caraman to doin the intervals of more serious work. As for myself, I have work for several years before

* Hon. Charlotte Ellis.

me, I think, so I shan't stray from my grand designs.

I discovered a most charming man, the other day, Robinson by name, who did the great sideboard with "Chevy Chase," one of the finest pieces of modern carving I have seen, and I think I shall call him in to help me to develop my great design. I have just been carrying out some fine ideas on paper for the corners of my cabinet—the broad leaves and flowers of the arum, or *Calle Ethiopica*, with demons climbing up and down them; moreover, I saw an old cabinet at one of the studios I went to which suggested an idea for another story with three panels, besides supports and a frieze, which, I think, will add greatly to the general effect of my *meuble*. I mean to call in Robinson's assistance for my design, and also if I come to a hitch in my "Cinderella," which is highly probable; he gives lessons, and his style of art is very superior to Sandars.

I don't very much expect I shall be here when you come to London, as I am meditating an excursion to Torquay in March, to see Aunt Harriet, and then a visit to Willy

up in Northumberland when the weather gets warmer.

I have seen Eddie* once or twice; we took him to a party at Lady Salisbury's last night, which was frightfully select. All the rooms were open, and it was consequently like a sort of desert, with the caravan halting in the first oasis. That oasis was, however, so cold that we were driven into the next room, where we hardly lined the first wall. It was fearful—there was too much room for anyone even to be trod upon. There was a better party at Lady Stanley's, and a respectable one at Lady de Grey's, last week. No news—nothing talked of but cattle plague. Mr. Worms' system was tried, it seems, in the great murrain in 1745, with partial success at first, but soon failed. Everything seems to fail except killing the cows.

We are going this evening with Eddie to Mr. Parry's entertainment of "Mr. and Mrs. Roseleaf and the Peculiar Family." I hear it is excellent, especially the husband's face when he treads on his wife's train.

I have been to several studios and to the winter sketches, which are charming. There

* Edward Denison.

were four sketches by Jackson called a "Tale of the Sea" (which I thought quite the most fascinating I ever saw), "A Fire," "The Raft at Midnight," "A Sail seen in Early Dawn," and "The Rescue." I am going to economize all my new garments this year in order to give myself two of them, and I hope to accomplish the other two next year. I think I could do the figures better myself, but it is impossible to put more poetry into the treatment of the subjects, and the skies and sea are beautifully done.

Eddie has been reading Miss Boyle's new book of "Tangled Weft," which he approves of very much. I saw your uncle Alfred yesterday. I think he has not been at all well lately, and I never saw anyone look worse—like an undertaker whose wages hadn't been raised!

SPEAKER'S HOUSE,
WESTMINSTER,
Sunday, 1866.

As I have been rather seedy to-day, and not able to go to church, I shall improve the occasion by answering your last letter, which I don't expect ever to have time to do in week-days.

I think it was very tiresome of you not to come up to London and enjoy a little quiet outing before Easter, for then I should have seen you.

As for the society itself, I confess it is rather too select to please me, except at Lady Russell's, where, as Duchess Harry (Cleveland) remarked : "It was such a shame to ask the £6 franchise to meet us before the Bill was passed," and where, I believe, the party consisted chiefly of dirty learned people with wonderful wives. I could speak to their dirty appearance, though not to their learning. Last night I went with Minny to Lady Stanley's, where I had the gratification of seeing Eddie. It was, as usual, select, which was a particular pity, for Aunt Charlotte had gone to Marlborough House to see a conjurer, and insisted, in spite of my prognostications, that she would be in plenty of time to send the carriage for me after it had set her home ! So we saw the party dissolve before our eyes, and I was actually the last person left except Edward Stanley and Minny—a thing that had never happened to me in my life. Luckily Mr. Stanley had his brougham, which he put at my disposal, and

so I got home half an hour before Aunt Charlotte, who came on herself to Dover Street when she found how late it was, and found the house shut up and everyone gone. I was beginning to realize Martin's famous picture of "The Last Man."

Uncle Denison* is, I think, on the whole less well. The doctors have enjoined perfect rest, and he is desired not to use his leg at all. I don't think he suffers, but it is a horrid bore for a person of his active habits to have to remain quiet and to be deprived of his usual air and exercise. Yesterday quantities of people came to see him, and I think they were rather too much for him, as he was much less well in the evening when I went to see him after dinner. Towards half-past nine he was better again, and this morning he was pretty well. It is likely to be a long and tiresome business, but not otherwise serious.

Have you heard of the present Lord and Lady Harrington? He was a clergyman, with nine children, living on £200 a year in Ireland, till his nephew died, and he has come in for £24,000 a year. The girls wore print dresses,

* The Speaker, Right Hon. J. Evelyn Denison.

and used to cook the dinner, but are very nice and lady like in manner. Isn't it like a romance ?

OSSINGTON,

NEWARK,

January, 1868.

Your very welcome letter was the first thing that greeted my eyes when I arrived at Ossington last Thursday, and I was able duly to convey all your messages to Eddie before he and the other victims set off for that questionable diversion, the Newark ball, that night.

As I had been delayed twelve hours at Ostend because the steamer's cargo was not complete, and thereby missed all my trains, besides having an awfully rough passage, I, of course, was delighted at having such an excellent excuse as my consequent fatigue not to prolong my journey by an additional ten miles to Newark and back, to say nothing of the miles I might have stood at the ball. Willy Denison, who was seedy, had to stay away too, and I diverted myself by administering as much consolation to him.

I am sorry to say your anticipations of our skating appear to have very little prospect of

being fulfilled. The weather is horribly warm here, varied with wind and rain. Not that I mind anything but the warmth, for it is pleasant to listen to the wind and think one has not a steamer in prospect; and Mr. Frederick Tayler is here, so I like nothing better than to have an excuse for staying in the house and watching him draw. He has begun such a charming drawing of wild ducks. Only one duck is painted in yet on his large board, but there is a very pretty project for it in charcoal.

We had nearly a fortnight's skating at Brussels, where the climate is very decidedly superior to this. I had so many pupils in all the various stages of beginning to instruct, that I had very little time to devote to my own improvement till the last two days, and then I had some very good lessons from first-rate skaters, and was put in the way of doing various things I had not an idea of before. I think with a couple of days' practice I could get on famously. You will be gratified to hear that everything we taught ourselves to do was on quite wrong principles.

The Wyndhams* came down to the ice one

* Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Wyndham.

day. I lent her a pair of skates, but her boots did not fit, and Mr. Wyndham hired two pairs ; but there was a screw loose, and the skates were bad, and he went off very speedily to look at the lions and tigers (we skate at the Zoological Gardens). Mrs. Wyndham introduced me to a Mr. Vignolles, a first-rate skater, who was helping her, and he afterwards gave me some lessons for which I am immensely indebted. He had the most charming little boy, of about seven years old, that I ever saw—who had only begun about a week, and skated quite beautifully — a delightful little child in black velvet and a fur cap, quite a little picture, and so civil. The last morning the creature offered to instruct me with the utmost gravity, and proposed to hold my hands to help me to go backwards !

Some of my pupils were awful at beginning, Mr. Ffrench especially, who pranced in a manner that I never saw equalled. I was obliged, for the credit of the Legation, to take him in hand, and I nearly fell down with laughing, he was so utterly absurd in his efforts. It was extremely amusing. But unluckily on Sunday a thaw set in and stopped all our proceedings.

We saw a good deal of the Wyndhams whilst they were at Brussels. They were kept there a week by the child's illness, and came and dined several times with us. We all like them very much, and I should be very glad to think there was a chance of their being named to Brussels. Mr. Ffrench is going to Berne very shortly, and I suppose they might succeed him. The child was well enough for them to go on to Berlin on Friday week.

Eddie seemed very flourishing. He went back to London on Saturday, so I did not see very much of him. He is coming back to these parts next week, for he is going to Osberton on Thursday for some more county balls—one at Retford and one at Serlby. I think as he advances in years he takes a more indulgent view of the frivolous dissipations of the world. Perhaps his real work is a sufficient antidote.

SHEEPWASH RECTORY,

MORPETH,

March 18, 1868.

Having heard from Aunt Charlotte that you were actually arrived and installed at Rome, I think it will be safe to write and thank you for your letter from Genoa, which

we were all glad to get. Eddie happened to come to Westminster that day, so he also had the benefit of the latest intelligence of you, which we are always glad to get and communicate to each other. . . .

I can't send you much news, as I have been a week in the North, and our heads have been full of confirmation classes, etc. We have about fifty candidates, and the confirmation takes place on April 23. There are, however, more curates and fewer dogs, two cows, and five sheep, which on the whole may be considered an improvement. We have a good deal more furniture this year than we ever had before, because Willy has inherited all my eldest brother's things, which he did not take with him to India, including all the cups won by him in various steeple-chases. Those and the 'dogs' plate make a fine show. If the Bishop comes to stay with us, I think I shall give him his coffee out of a military steeple-chase article, which looks to me more like a coffee pot than anything else, and beer out of the dog's cup.

There was a good deal of excitement about politics before I left London, but I can't say I entered into it at all. Things must go

creaking on, I suppose, till the next Parliament meets and whoever has the management of affairs will be sure to put their foot in it somehow, so I hope it will be the Conservatives.

I thought Eddie looking very well and in very good spirits, and I am in great admiration of his energy in going to Paris to learn French as I understand he is going to do. . . .

Do you ever see anything of Mr. Cholmeley? Remember me to him if you do. Have you been making any Campagna expeditions? Dear me! how I envy you being at Rome again. It is very enjoyable here, however, quite warm, and the days so bright and sunny—all the primroses and common flowers out, but I am afraid nothing like those lovely bouquets we used to get at the corners of the streets of Rome.

SPEAKER'S HOUSE,

WESTMINSTER,

October 21, 1868.

I have long been intending to write and thank you for your nice sympathizing letter,* but I was still ill when I got it; and then

* Lord Howard de Walden had died after a very short illness.

in all the terrible preparation for leaving our home for ever—everything connected with associations of him—I had not the heart to write. It was so very wretched, and it seemed as if writing brought all the past, which was never out of my mind, still more vividly before me.

I can't tell you how kind everybody has been to us; we felt it very much indeed. No word can say how kind Uncle Denison and Aunt Charlotte have been to me—at a moment, too, when I most needed it. I had to stay in London for a little to see lawyers and also to carry out my cure, and I asked to come to Westminster to be a little quiet.

My doctors say my system has received a shock from which it will take me a long time to recover, though I am now as strong as I shall be for months; but they recommend a Southern climate, and warmth and quiet, so I shall probably go to Aunt Harriet as soon as she has decided where she will winter. First I shall go to Willy, who has also been ill and very miserable. We have a good deal to talk over before I go abroad, and I cannot bear to think of him now alone and unhappy.

Mamma is thinking of taking a house in

London for herself and Pussy. She is in a terrible state. Pussy has been so nice and affectionate: it is quite impossible to say how nice she has been. She has a great deal to go through at times, poor child!

SHEEPWASH RECTORY,
MORPETH,
November 27, 1868.

I must write a few lines to you to thank you for your letter and the Newark paper. I read Eddie's speech with great interest, and thought it very good and sensible. I am glad to hear the others were still better. I hope that does not mean he is deteriorating, but only that he did not care to repeat himself, and had said all that was most important already. I think that an excellent sign, for then, we may hope, whenever he does speak in the House, it will be to say something worth listening to.

I was very sorry to think I should just miss you at Ossington, but, perhaps it was as well—I do not feel equal yet to meeting so many people who are almost strangers—and I think I mind it a great deal more now since I have been quiet, than I did at first when I was obliged to see so many and do so much,

and the excitement of having to think and do gave me strength for the time. Now, since I have been quiet I feel the reaction so much more, and, day and night, I cannot get out of my mind the remembrance of that terrible night.

Tell Mrs. Denison how sorry I am not to see her too again, and how I shall remember her kind visit to me at Westminster; I should have liked to have seen both her and you again, but I am glad now to have been spared meeting the others.

Aunt Harriet has decided on Nice at last, and I suppose I shall be there the week after next. To me it seems as if all places would be the same to me now. If I could only see the sun and blue skies again, I feel it would be easier to get strong, and then, with time, comfort would come.

Olga Smirnoff, a great friend of mine, is at Mentone, and that will be a great pleasure, as it will be easy for us to manage to see each other.

I hope this will find you before you leave Thoresby.

VILLA LIONS,

NICE SUR MER,

May 18, 1870.

I saw very little of Dr. Frank at Cannes. The governess of the Cork children wished me very much to see him and persuade him to send Emily Cork a written opinion about M. E.

I had got wet through the day before, going back to the station, and had to stay two hours in my wet things, so I felt very ill when I went over, and my head ached so that I could hardly think, but I did not know whether there might not be something serious about those children to whom I am quite devoted. They have been my one pleasant occupation all this winter, so I went.

Dr. Frank spoke to me about them chiefly, and afterwards about Eddie.* He made no allusion to the professional treatment—he spoke of him only as his friend, and expressed his deepest regret, and his sincere admiration of his character in every respect. He said he had seldom met with such a noble

* Edward Denison had died at Melbourne, January 26, 1870.

character, and he spoke most highly of him, and with very great affection as well as admiration. He told me he had heard all details from Lady Alwyne Compton, and he seemed very much touched and overcome when he was speaking about him. He seemed to feel it so much that I hardly liked to say a great deal to him, and after what Aunt Charlotte had said to me about the voyage having been a mistake I carefully avoided that subject. That is my impression of the conversation. I will not say it is correct. I was feeling very ill and confused at the time, and all I remember was how grieved and truly sorry he seemed to be.

Dearest Louisa, I quite understand what a bitter trial it must be to you to think how nearly you were going with him, and what might have been avoided if you had. But it seems to me that God in His wisdom orders all things as is best for us. "He writes straight in crooked lines," and though we do not know and cannot see, there is a reason for all that happens. We can but submit, and try to feel, Thy will be done not as I would, but as Thou orderest.

Still the sorrow remains, and I think even

when time does not lessen it, it becomes holy and blessed in the end. There are some griefs that can never pass away, and can never be forgotten, only as one follows another they seem to swallow each other up, and merge in one another, like one wave following the other. It feels to me as if it would be a misfortune to forget some times and some things.

ROME,
March 1, 1874.

Your plans seem delightfully vague, and unless you come to Rome on your way to Palermo, I don't see much prospect of our meeting. Willy and Henrietta will probably have passed you somewhere on the road, for they left Rome on the 21st for Florence, intending to return to England by Spezzia, Genoa, and the Cornice. Willy rather hoped to see you somewhere, but I confess the probabilities of your meeting seemed very doubtful, as neither of you would have any idea where the other would be, and you might be in the same hotel without finding it out. I am in great despair at losing Henrietta. Every day I find fresh charms in her, and every day endears her more to me, and I

think the liking is mutual—indeed, I trust it is more than liking. I could not have a sister I could love more than I do Henrietta in every way. The sweetest disposition, the prettiest manners, and such a childlike innocence and purity of thought, combined with a great deal of character. She is, indeed, a treasure, and Willy is very happy. I am sorry to say the accounts of her father are not at all satisfactory, and it is the only thing that reconciled me to her departure. It would have been dreadful if we had urged them to stay on till perhaps she might have arrived too late. We did not wish to alarm her, but it is quite possible that any relapse or any change for the worse might prove fatal very rapidly. If all goes well they will only stay a few days in London and then go home, or to Brinkburn Priory, where they will stay with the grandmother, Mrs. Cadogan, whilst they are arranging the house at Sheepwash.

· · · I have all but concluded about my apartment, and written to the Murrays to take it for me from the 1st of May. I do not expect to come into it till November, and probably shall remain with Aunt Harriet till then somewhere or other. I am more and

more convinced it is an experiment to try. I know all the objections to it, and there are a great many, but I shall at least feel that I am not in anybody's way there, and there are so many things I could do at Florence that I could not in England.

Olga's opinion is not one to influence me in this matter; she is essentially unpractical and fond of luxury and society. She could not live a life of privation; I saw quite enough of that when she was at Nice. She must have society and intellectual society. As for me, I shall have my friends, the Forbes, the Murrays, and some others. I shall draw in the galleries, I shall learn Italian perfectly, and, as I shan't be able to come to England in the summer, I shall go somewhere else that will be nearer. In fact, I think I shall be able to do very well—at all events, I shall try. It is what I always expected I should have to do sooner or later, and I might have had to begin in 1868. When Mamma comes back to Europe, if she settles anywhere in England, she may perhaps ask me to come to her for a time, and in the meantime there are six months before me before I take the decisive plunge.

It has been a very pleasant winter at Rome—such heavenly weather—and now spring is bursting forth it is too charming. I have just made acquaintance with Gregorovius and am charmed with him.

VIA ARCHIBUSIERI,
FLORENCE,
1875.

MY DEAREST LOUISA,

I write you a very hurried line of thanks for your letter, which I was so glad to get this morning, and for which I thank you a thousand times.

It has been a surprise to myself—for I did not know how much I had grown unconsciously to care for him*—but in the five weeks that he has been away at Rome I had time to think it over and over again, and I do feel that there will be no happiness equal to seeing him happier ; and he is so grateful for the little I can do, I feel nothing in the world would be a sacrifice for him.

Friday Night.

My letter has been interrupted by a visit from his daughter Ersilia and her husband,

* The Duke of Sermoneta.

Count Lovatelli, who came to Florence for three days to see their children; and though they slept at the hotel, they lived here. Ersilia brought a charming little boy, Wittold, who is five years old, the dearest little creature that ever was—a regular little Italian, with immense eyes, and full of vivacity and gentleness. He alternately says he will be a bishop or a cook.

Ersilia is charming—learned like a lady of olden times. She writes letters in Latin like Cicero, and is full of amusement and fun. She is extremely strong in Greek, and we had heaps of learned professors to meet her and a dinner at the De Gubernatis to meet one man who was strong in Japanese and another in Sanskrit; a Russian lyric poet, Padre Giuliano, who gives lectures on Dante; Count Tolstoi, who is a most celebrated Russian poet and author; then Professor Amorini, great in Etruscan antiquities. They all looked ill and dirty, and I was thankful to sit still and listen to them, on the plea that I am still unaccustomed to speak Italian. The Duke is good enough to say very pretty things about my Italian letters, which he says were formed on the study of Dante and Boccaccio, and

I am allowed to listen silently for the present.

The marriage is to be as quiet as possible, not to be made into a political event, as it is an immense thing for a Roman Prince to dispense with the Pope's dispensation, which can only be done in consequence of the recent law about civil marriages, and it will raise a tremendous outcry among the blacks, who will say he has become a Protestant.

We do not know yet when it can be. I shall write to tell Aunt Charlotte* when anything is known. There will be no trouble about settlements, as the law provides most amply in the case of my becoming a widow; and he says he wishes everything to be left at my disposal—that whatever I may give up to the Teanos may be entirely a voluntary act on my part, which he thinks will help to conciliate their goodwill.

As for other arrangements—such as about the trousseau, etc., which disturbed Aunt Harriet—the life I shall have to lead will be such a very quiet one, entirely devoted to him, that it will have to be very quiet. He is so unhappy at having to go out that we shall

* Lady Charlotte Denison.

always remain at home and receive in the evening all those he cares to see, as we used to do in old days at Brussels.

He comes every morning at 9.30. I write his letters for him and read to him. His friends come here to see him, and he dines every day with me. Sometimes we walk together ; but, as you see, my whole time is entirely taken up.

He has taken on the apartment for three years, with the mezzanino for his two servants, Alberto and Costantino, and we have engaged a housemaid to help Clarisse.

He seems so happy now ; I only trust it may last, but it is the reaction from the misery of his previous life. I hope to be the means of drawing his children still closer to him. It is touching to see how fond he is of them, and so gentle and affectionate, and how he feels any appearance of neglect, whilst his pride prevents his showing it to them. I already love the little Leone, his favourite grandson.

And now it is very late, so I must end.

Ever yours most affectionately,

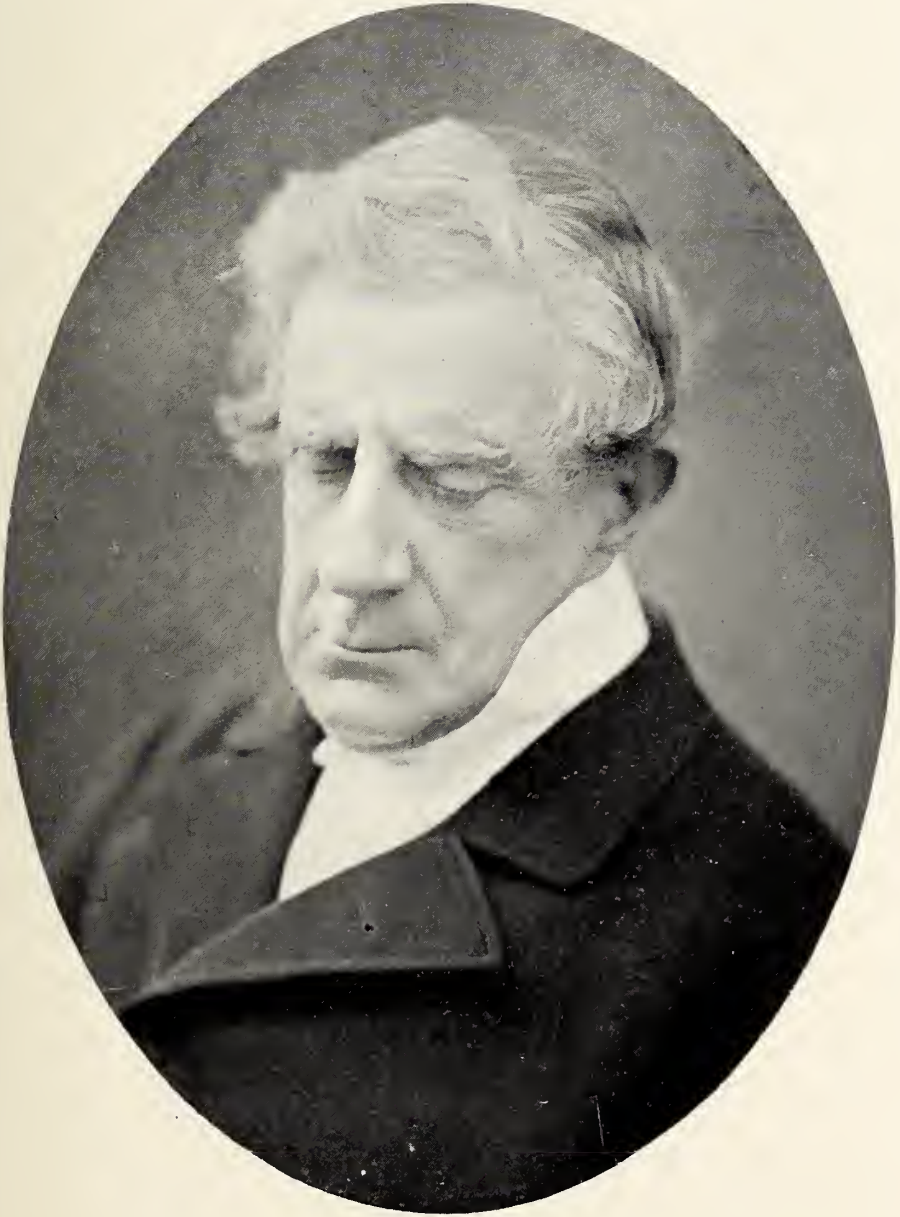
HARRIET G. ELLIS.

PALAZZO CAETANI,
ROME,

July 5, 1875.

You must not think I have forgotten you because I do not write, but you will imagine easily how little time I have to myself. I trust to your hearing from Aunt Charlotte all about me. Still, I should like very much indeed to hear sometimes from you, and, above all, should be pleased if you could hold out any hope of coming to Italy another year.

You cannot think of how happy I am. I have everything in the world I could wish for, not only my chief object, who I care more for every day, to whom I feel I can be more and more as time goes on, but five nieces, to whom I can also be of great use, and who seem to look upon me already as a sort of good fairy. My time is, of course, entirely given up to him. His great occupation is to try and do something himself every day to improve my apartments, which had not been lived in for three years, and therefore had gone rather to ruin. Then I am presented to all his habitués. I walk with him, drive with him, and we are together all day long. You cannot imagine



MICHEL ANGELO CAETANI, DUKE OF SERMONETA.

To face p. 32.

how good and gentle and thoughtful he is. Rome is rather empty now, but it leaves us more to each other, which I am glad of, as it is still an exertion to me to understand Italian conversation, especially when full of allusions to people and things I know nothing about. When Ersilia's learned men, moreover, add Latin and Greek quotations to the rest, I get completely beyond my depth. But it is all very new and very pleasant, and there is a feeling of home and rest that is indescribable, as well as having an object in life to which to devote myself, and the conviction that one is not living for oneself. I cannot conceive greater happiness than that of feeling that every hour of one's existence is a help to soothing the life of another. It was what I always longed for. I don't at all despise the accessories—the plunge into real Italian life—which was what I always wished to try, but never dreamt would be so thoroughly in my destiny.

VIA ARCHIBUSIERI, 8,
FLORENCE.

We have been at Florence since Sunday. I was very busy the first days putting everything in place that had arrived from England

in my absence, and now the little home has really a most home-like look, full of associations of Brussels and Westminster. It looked very tiny when we first arrived after our Roman palace, but it is more cosy, and I feel here in the midst of old friends.

I think the visit we paid to Rome has been very useful in many ways, and I am very glad it took place at the quiet time of the year, for I now feel that I understand the place and the ways, and shall be able to take a decided line when we go back. There were rather too many tame cats about the house, and in the absence of the Teanos and Ersilia we succeeded to those of the other two families. They had a way of calling just about dinner-time, and then walking into the dining-room and sitting round the table, till I really sometimes did not know who was dining and who was looking on. It reminded me partly of the Kings of France dining in public in old times and partly of feeding-time at the Zoological Gardens. But that is to be put a stop to when we come back, because he likes it as little as I do. Only in the days of his solitude and blindness many little habits and ways prevailed, or, rather, were fallen

into unconsciously, which are now to be reformed.

The departure was nearly as great a function as our arrival. We had a regular *levée*, beginning at breakfast-time, of all the relations and tame cats left in Rome, and lasting till we started for the station at 9 p.m. Then we had to have our hands kissed by the whole establishment before leaving the palace, and then finally by everyone who accompanied us to the station, including the coachman. The latter I was not prepared for, and I confess it nearly upset my gravity, for he twisted round on the box just as I was going to get out of the carriage, and requested to be permitted to have the honour, which must have produced a most ludicrous effect on the spectators.

The whole life is so utterly different from English life, and more so than I have had any experience of before. The only English persons I saw during the whole time I was at Rome were Mr. Kennedy, Secretary of Legation, and the Duchesse Lante, and those only three or four times : nothing but Italians the whole of the rest of the time. I feel in quite another world, but it is a very happy world, though I am sometimes very glad of

a chance of being able to speak my own language a little.

We have had the loveliest weather—cool breezes blowing from the sea, and such tints, no words can describe them—and everything in the way of vegetation so green and beautiful, and such hundreds of unknown flowers and plants.

I had a letter from Mamma, from Pekin, starting for the Great Wall of China on my very wedding day, still having heard nothing of even the engagement.

Now I must end. I wish I could enclose you some of our skies and sunshine; the view from the Belvedere under the Pergola of pumpkins is divine. I do nothing but look forward to your coming again to Rome; don't forget that we have a spare room and could take you in if Mrs. Denison could spare you. All the rooms are *en suite*, which throws away a great many, but we shall, I hope, be able to try in the autumn and see what can be done with them. Onorato* has an apartment of three rooms on our floor, and there is another large one unfurnished, which gives us less space to dispose of than

* Prince Teano, the Duke's son.

one would think from the size and number of the rooms ; but give my best love to Mrs. Denison.

Yours most affectionately,

HARRIET G. CAETANI.

VIA ARCHIBUSIERI, 8,
FLORENCE,
October 16, 1875.

I hope some good wind or anything else may bring you to Italy again, though I believe our prospects of coming to England next year are really very promising. We executed a journey to Parma for a week to see the Murrays ; then for a day to Ravenna, and then to Rimini ; and we had not a single contretemps during the whole month that we were away, so I have great hopes for England if all goes well.

I don't think I could ever leave Il Duca Mio ; he clings so much to having me always with him ; he cannot bear me to go anywhere without him ; he even asks me to take him to the dentist, and to church with me, that he may not be left alone. I was surprised at his wishing to go to my church, but he said as I went with him to his it was only

right that he should go to mine, and he liked the service.

All my things have been coming out from England—the pictures and cabinets that used to be at Westminster, and those that Nora Campbell had charge of. You cannot think how home-like it makes the apartment look, and so full of associations and recollections. I feel as if I had lived here all my life, and I grow fonder of it every day.

We are going to Rome in November for a month. Aunt Har. has sent us two chests full of plate, to say nothing of linen, which we are going to take to Rome, as the meat dish is about the size of our dining-table here, and I don't think could come down the stairs if we tried to dine in the sitting-room on our first floor.

We have been having various visitors *en passant*—the William Ashleys, the Walpoles, Colonel Caldwell, and now Constance and John Leslie have just arrived. My friend Evelina Fenzi—née Douglas Galton—has also appeared. She lives at the Villa Fenzi, outside the Porta San Niccolo, which has the loveliest views of Florence that ever were seen. There have also been great improve-

ments in the direction of San Miniato. The great ascent from the Porta San Niccolo, which is directly below San Miniato, has been finished, and now it is quite easy to zigzag up to it on foot, through a delicious garden, which when the trees have grown up a little will be perfect—such views of Florence and all the hills around—and then it will be delightful for us, as it is so close.

Olga writes to announce that she is coming to set up in Italy! I believe everyone will follow my example soon, and, I hope, as prosperously. It seems that she fell ill on her way to Russia and had to remain at Warsaw, and her doctor ordered her to try the climate of Italy. Madame Smirnoff, being settled at Moscow with her relations, decided on staying there, and so Olga has to set up independently. I think it much the best thing that she can do, for they did not pull well together, and in that case it is better to part for a time at least.

And now I shall end as I began, with repeated wishes that you should come out again to Italy. Nobody knows or can appreciate it who has not been here in the summer. Certainly August was rather hot at Florence

this year, but Rimini was delightful, and it is impossible to say how beautiful the country becomes, especially in harvest time.

We met Gordini at the dentist's, one day, and he spoke to us about you. Il Duca Mio remarked: "How little one need know to be a good master for the English!" I am rather low at the slow progress of my Italian. He will not let me use grammar, and only read very little, and the best authors, but I am getting to understand much better than I did, but I feel speaking Italian is like skating. One is delighted with one's progress as soon as one begins to go on alone and straight forwards, but when one begins graces it is very slow work.

VIA ARCHIBUSIERI, 8,
New Year's Day, 1876.

I cannot let the New Year pass away without sending you my best thanks for your letter, which was most welcome as well as all good wishes for the coming season. I cannot do more than say, I hope it may bring you as much happiness as the last has brought to me: a happiness that seems only to go on increasing with time. You cannot think what a quiet,

peaceful life we lead ; everything goes as if on wheels, and we have nothing but bright happy faces in our little home. All our household look up to us as if we were their parents, and one seems as if one could not give any of them a greater pleasure than to ask them to do something for us. His family is more than I could wish—so kind, and affectionate, and grateful to me. They are devoted to their father, and say that I have been the cause of making him so much happier and more cheerful than he has been for years, and that already I have so much influence over him.

Indeed, I think I see a great difference in him already, and he no longer talks so sadly as he used to do of his blindness, though of course there are moments of depression and melancholy to which they tell me he has been always subject.

Sometimes I cannot help asking myself if it is really true, and I cannot get used to feeling so happy. The one heavy weight that seemed to weigh down my life before is gone, and I feel I really have now a home and a place where I am wanted, and which is my own ; and that, instead of being looked upon as a supernumerary, I am a very useful member of

the family. You would hardly believe it, but I hardly ever feel inclined to contradict any one, which I think must prove a great change in my character.

I used to feel as if I was hardening by degrees into stone, for want of some outward symptoms of affection, and now, indeed, there has been a wonderful deliverance, and I feel as if the whole of my past life, step by step, has been one slow, long preparation for what is now a double happiness.

I was so much interested to hear all you said about Ossington.* It brought back such memories of past happy days spent there, and, at the same time, it made me very sad to think of the great change there is now. Aunt Charlotte talked of even coming out to Naples, as a duty, if she heard that Aunt Harriet was really ill. I wish she would. If she could nerve herself to make the exertion, I think it would do her much good ; but I can now understand how terrible her loss has been to her, and how it must have cut, to the very roots, all real enjoyment of life.

We are going back to Rome on the 15th, and I suppose shall be there a month or six

* Lord Ossington had died in 1873.

weeks, and then come back here. I like the change, as it is so good for him ; but I think if I have a preference it is for my dear little Paradiso here, which is the admiration of everybody, and full of souvenirs and associations. And now I can only end, as I always do, with a very earnest wish that some good influence may bring you here again before very long. I should so like to show you my two homes, and most of all that you should know my Arcangelo Michele. You cannot think how diverted he is at the idea of the preparations made for conversing in Italian with him.

PALAZZO CAETANI,
ROMA,
February 16, 1876.

So many thanks for your nice long letter, which was a very great pleasure to me. It is quite like a ray of sunshine on a dark day hearing from you, and brings back all that was pleasantest in past times. Not that I mean my present life is dark, but even in my beautiful Italian climate there are dull bad days, and much as I have to be thankful for, and to make me happy in my present life, I cannot forget old friends, and what made the

brightness of the past, or give up the thoughts of seeing you all, without a great pang. But it is such an occupation to me, such a constant call on my attention in every way, that sometimes I feel it is better for me at first to be entirely separated from my friends till I know my part thoroughly and can do all without any distractions. Every day I feel things go better and better, and it is impossible to say how kind and affectionate the whole family are, and our grandchild Leone is a perfect little angel. You cannot think how dear he is, so gentle and thoughtful for his grandfather, and so intelligent, besides being so graceful and highbred. He is only six, but quite like a little man, and spends hours with us. He has all the affection and sentiment of a grown up person, and it is quite the prettiest thing in the world to see how he watches for every little way in which he can be useful to his grandfather. Ersilia's little boy Vitold is also a great pet, but quite different, like a little mouse, with great bright quick eyes, and always asking questions—nothing escapes him. He calls me “Nonna Enrichetta” or “Nonna Miss Ellis,” and when very excited, sometimes “Ellis” *tout court*. He writes letters to us every

day, though Ersilia only lives at two minutes distance from us. One day he wrote a Latin letter to his grandfather, and two days after, when he came with his mother to dine with us, he said apologetically: "Nonno Io non ti scrivo piu in Latino perche Nonna Enrichetta non lo capisce!"

You asked what you owed for the photographs. *Il Duca mio* who took me himself to choose them, says only a *ringraziamento*, and he asks if my friend the *signora delle saliere* (which is the way in which he realizes you at present) would accept a little *opuscolo*, which he has just had reprinted. It has been a great interest to him, and we have been very busy correcting the press, and now he gets the most flattering letters from all sorts of learned men to whom he has sent copies. Carlo Vassallo, alluding to his descent from Pope Boniface VIII., whom Dante hated so cordially, that the feeling inspired many parts of the "Divina Commedia," said: "Mi pare di vedere in Lei il mediatore che dovia in Paradiso riconciliare l' Allighieri al suo nemico."

Yesterday I had my first dinner-party (*fuori la famiglia*), and it did very well—the George Howards, Lord and Lady Ripon, Sir

Charles Stuart, and Miss Lockwood. In the midst of the dinner the three beautiful children*—Leone, Roffredo, and Livio—came to say good-night to their grandfather, and Leone stayed to dessert, captivating everyone's admiration. It was like a *coup de théâtre*. The dinner went off very well, and on Thursday we are to have a small party and make tea. I think we have asked about sixty people. I had a private audience of Princess Marguerite on Saturday, and asked to be allowed to dispense with going to the Quirinal in the evening, as we never go out anywhere. He is miserable in a strange house, and cannot bear me to leave him, so I have conveyed my excuses to everybody, and I must say people are most amiable to me, as far as I know. If any are not, I have not heard of it. It is no sacrifice to me to give up going out, and he is very good indeed in asking all my friends to come.

I had many other things to say, but I must end now, as I hear him calling me.

* Children of Prince and Princess Teano.

PALAZZO CAETANI,

Begun October 30, finished November 1, 1876.

. . . We are thinking of going back to Florence in a few days. Mamma writes to say she will be there about the 14th.

I cannot tell you what an admirable arrangement our double life is. It rather puzzles me sometimes to keep the threads of two such different existences separate, and to take them up again at such short intervals, but it cuts short quantities of little annoyances before they have time to become grievances, and, in fact, I can only say that my life is such a happy one now, I feel I have nothing to wish for. It is to the past like the bright blue skies of Italy which we have been revelling in as compared to the cold grey climate of England.

Everyone is very full of the approaching elections, which will be decided about the 5th. There is much reason to expect that both Onorato and Giacomo Lovatelli will lose theirs. Giacomo will be very sorry for himself, but I am afraid no one else will mind it, and I think Onorato will console himself easily if he is not returned, and will go off to Egypt for the winter with an easy conscience.

However, whatever happens, these elections

are a very sore subject in the *secondo piano*, and I avoid them as much as possible, as I begin to believe more and more in the downfall of the country under the existing state of things. I suppose the deaths of the Pope and the King, whenever they may happen, may give us some insight into the future prospects of Italy, but at present everything is going downwards rapidly—reckless expenditure and exorbitant taxation, with an utter want of conscientiousness and open jobbery in every department, are the characteristics of the present system, and we go from bad to worse as one Ministry turns out the other in order to get their share of places and patronage. The collection of the taxes alone costs 36 per cent., and the country still pays 4 per cent. war tax. Everybody robs and jobs; the Chamber of Deputies is a farce; the Government, every time it changes, appoints new prefects and syndics, who influence the elections; and laws are passed by hundreds without anybody taking the trouble to understand what they are about. Last year the number of laws voted since 1870 was already over 6,000, and you may imagine the results of such a system of legislation.

The people suffer the most, and some day there will be a terrible explosion. You may imagine, with these opinions, how little *il Duca mio* can sympathize with any who uphold the present system, and, unfortunately, both Giacomo and Onorato are all for it. Onorato says he cannot believe that all the enormous sacrifices made by the country can be in vain, and hopes for a future which to us seems more than problematic. . . .

We have been leading a very quiet life here. The *forestiere* have not yet arrived for their winter quarters, and Roman society is still out of town. I have succeeded in excluding the parasites who were my aversion, and instead of calling on us three times a day their visits are reduced to about three times a month. I believe they cordially detest me, and every now and then certain expressions of their astonishment are conveyed to me at not being constantly invited to dinner, but I turn a deaf ear to all, and leave them to be consoled by Ada* and Ersilia.† We are instead gradually collecting a set of the better-mannered of Ersilia's antiquaries and a few learned men; and though it will be rather

* Princess Teano.

† Countess Lovatelli.

slow work, I think, with time, we shall gather a pleasant and varied society about us, which will be a great help to me, as my chief difficulty is to provide anti-soporifics for the evening ; and when we have been together all day long it is difficult to find rousing topics to converse about after dinner. . . .

8, VIA ARCHIBUSIERI,

Palm Sunday, 1877.

So many thanks for your letter, which I am just able to answer before we go back to Rome. Mamma, and Cat, and Augustus, arrived last night, and we shall stay to see them off, and then return to Rome, where Onorato has just arrived from Egypt.

I am sorry to hear how much illness you have had all this winter. I consider the English climate a permanent illness sufficient to make anyone feel low, though I know you do not agree with me on that point.

I am thinking much of climate, as we are meditating a change of apartment, and I want something which will be cool in summer and warm in winter—in fact, I dream of a summer and winter set of rooms. Whenever I think of leaving this I am in despair ; but there is

no denying the stairs are long ; in summer we are very hot ; and there is hardly room for my things. Mamma has presented me with the famous white and gold chairs she ordered three or four years ago, forty-eight in all, and two sofas, and I have been obliged to take two rooms in a lodging near to house them in, and my great carved bookcase is coming out, and we have decided it is to be here in the midst of all my own property, and really there will be hardly space to move when it comes.

When we come back in May we are to spend the summer in looking at every conceivable apartment till we find one that suits us. I have heard of one that sounds as if it ought to do—beautiful rooms with a large garden full of magnolias, but it has no view and is close to a theatre, so we shall be plagued with music, a most serious consideration. I wish you could come out and see this Paradiso before we leave it ; perhaps it would inspire you with a wish to take it when we give it up, and become Florentines instead of Bournemouthians.

I am afraid I can send you little news that would interest you. I am told that Mrs.

Bruce is dreadfully put out because she can no longer go to see Cardinal Howard, or receive visits from him, without his being accompanied by one, if not two, priests, whose constant occupation at present is to admonish His Eminence that it is not befitting for him to do something or other that he wants to do.

Poor Mrs. Walpole has been staying with the Murrays for about a month, and is now going back to Rome on business, to settle various little matters. Lady Crawford tells me that Alice Holford, who used to come and read Dante with *il Duca mio*, is to marry Albert Grey, Lord Grey's heir, and the family are much pleased.

I feel as if I was writing you a very dull letter. I suppose it is the effect of that very unusual phenomenon, a bad day. This evening we expect M. de Circourt and the Comtesse D'Affry to dinner, and in the evening Lady Hobart, and perhaps the Boyles and Lady Georgina Codrington and Sir James Lacaita will come to meet Mamma. The Murrays, of course, will be expected.

I do not fancy we shall come north this summer, unless to Paris, perhaps, if the Duke

has business to settle. He has considerable investments in the Rentes Françaises ; otherwise we talk of going to Perugia in the hottest weather, where the Murrays are probably to be this summer, and perhaps to Castellamare if Ersilia goes there, as she generally does every year.

I think Mamma will probably be going direct home to the Mote* from here.

PALAZZO CAETANI,

ROME,

Wednesday, 1878.

. . . My letter has been so often interrupted that I have had to let it lie by for two or three days, and must end now in a hurry.

Our matters have been proceeding very slowly, but still proceeding. Cardinal Di Pietro told us that a very little while ago the idea of permitting a Roman Prince to marry a Protestant “avrebbe bastato per fare cadere la Cupola di San Pietro.”

I think it is coming slowly down, so to speak. Our letter was read by the Pope with great satisfaction, but it has had to be

* Lady Howard de Walden had taken a lease of Lord Romney's place, The Mote Park, Maidstone.

referred to the Holy Inquisition and a College of Cardinals. It seems the Pope cannot give the permission for a mixed marriage himself alone. Di Pietro is working away, however, and if all goes right I am to go to the Villa Caetani at Frascati by myself for the eight days of separation the Church requires, and then Cardinal di Pietro will come there and celebrate the marriage in his own chapel. It is, of course, kept as secret as possible here, and I only tell you and my aunts as you will tell Aunt Charlotte. Please say I will write to her in a day or two, when we hope to have something more to tell. My Duca sends you many messages. Livio comes and pays us long visits every day, and his delight is to play with your Piazza Navona cat, which he always puts back in its place with the greatest care.

PALAZZO MOZZI,

FIRENZE,

July 21, 1878.

I am sorry I dismayed Aunt Charlotte by asking her to be civil to Vitelleschi. My idea did not go so far as expecting her to invite him to dinner, but I thought she would have liked to have heard an Italian tell her many things

about the Caetanis which none could do better than he could ; and if he could have met Lady Louisa Percy at her house, she would have drawn him out about all the Roman society of the time when she was in Italy, and it would have been very amusing.

As to what you say about our third, or, rather, fourth, marriage, I quite agree with you as far as I am concerned, but I was most anxious for it, on my Duca's account. According to the Catholic religion, until the ecclesiastical function was performed, he was debarred from all the sacraments of his Church. He had been already excommunicated for having carried the plebiscite to Florence in 1870. On that occasion the King drew him aside, and said : " Che pensa Ella della Scomunica ? " He replied : " Maesta e un affare di segretario di Stato." As long as it was a matter of politics he did not care so much, because he said the Pope had no right to excommunicate except for matters of dogma. When he proposed to marry me, he said for marrying a Protestant he incurred the penalties of excommunication ; but as he had already been excommunicated for political reasons, he might as well be so for two reasons as one.

All the same, he cared very much for it, as he is thoroughly Catholic, however liberal in his views ; and last year, when our Padre Curato said that unless our marriage was regularized it would be impossible for him to be admitted to the Communion, although here politics are not taken into consideration, it was a very great disappointment. He would equally without the religious ceremony have been debarred from all spiritual assistance in case of a fatal illness and from any religious rites at his burial, all things to which a Catholic holds.

You may imagine, therefore, how much I held to all impediments on my part being removed, and the marriage was preceded by a full and absolute removal of all pains and penalties incurred under the Church. To him it has been an immense satisfaction, and brought a rest and calm which he had not before, and that has been my great consolation.

We are more and more pleased every day with Mozzi ;* you cannot think what a Paradise it is. We wander about for hours in the

* The Sermonetas had moved from Via Archibusieri to the Palazzo Mozzi at Florence.

garden, sitting about on the terraces. Sometimes I read aloud to him, and then we walk to another terrace. And the views are heavenly. We have a thick labyrinth of trees at the top, with tunnels of shade; and then every evening we gently walk up to Sir James Hudson's terraces, where the sunsets are divine. We are going to Rome in the beginning of August for a month. I suppose we shall have our audience with the Pope, and the Maestro di Casa Tronti has bought two apostolical horses to replace the makeshift we got last winter. They are black Roman horses, and I am told match our beautiful old Cisternense very well, but I am rather anxious to see them, as I have not much faith in Tronti's knowledge of horseflesh.

Then we must be back here in the beginning of September, because we have promised to help De Gubernatis, the President of the Oriental Congress, to entertain his guests and to take in the Max Müllers and one or two others, if they come. I mean to give them a garden-party in the enchanted grounds of Mozzi. You cannot think how ideal it is. The gardener makes superhuman exertions to tidy it up, and there is enough of wild

straggling neglect to make it most picturesque, with its flight of 200 steps, and vases, and statues, and terraces, and grottoes, and abundance of fruit-trees and flowers, figs, pomegranates, vines, myrtles, magnolias, and all sorts of plants.

Our Orientalists will be here about September 12. In November we shall be back in Rome, and perhaps all go to Cisterna to receive Cardinal di Pietro when he takes possession of his diocese of Velletri.

It has been very hot these last two or three days, but the house is deliciously fresh.

I have begun my school of embroidery. Yesterday one workwoman came, and tomorrow I am to have two. By degrees I shall extend their numbers, but at present I have to give so much instruction that I cannot manage more.

I had a sad letter from poor Olga yesterday, full of troubles and worries. She was in lodgings at Paris. I wonder if you will see her when you go abroad; but I do not even know whether Paris will be your route. Do try and come here at the end of September or in October to see Mozzi in all its glories.

PALAZZO CAETANI,
ROMA,
December 2, 1878.

. . . Then there came this plan about Rus-
ciano,* which I am wild about. You can't
think what an enchanting place it is—just
outside the Porta S. Niccolo, up rather a steep
little bit of hill, but about six minutes to drive
downhill to Mozzi. Of course, Mozzi will
always be at your disposal whenever you like
to come into the town, and we shall always be
glad to see you if we are in, and if we are not,
you will make yourselves at home there, and
every now and then we hope you will be able
to vary the residence of Rusciano by coming
down to stay with us. It will be too enchanting.
There will be quantities of room at Rusciano,
and everything is delightfully furnished, with
all sorts of comforts, and charming terraces
with lovely views all round the house, and a
garden and a *bosco* and *selvatico*; in fact, it is
a perfect *Paradiso*, and Italy itself in April
and May is Paradise. It is even a great deal
nicer than Mozzi, and what more can anyone
wish for?

* Villa Rusciano was taken in the spring of 1879 by
Viscountess Ossington in order to be near the Sermonetas.

Here we have been very quiet, and I have chiefly been occupied in furnishing, or, rather, completing, the Bigliardo, in which I flatter myself I have produced rather an effect of my own, now that all the dark red satin curtains and *portières*, with their *cinqe cento* embroideries, have been put up. I have covered all the lower half of the walls with old Oriental carpets and very dark claret-coloured cloth with Eastern embroideries, and I have fished out several Depositions and Cardinals, life size, which had been put away as lumber, to take the place of the engravings that used to spoil the walls. The whole gives an extremely mysterious sort of darkness to the room, which leads people to suppose the pictures are much better than they really are. You would not know the place again. I consider it a success, as far as it goes. It lights up very well at night, and I wish you could be here for my first party of cats.

To-morrow we are going to have a clerical dinner—our friend, Bishop Strossmayer, who to our great delight has come back to Rome; and a very learned Orientalist, Canonico Fabiani, who came to see us at Florence; and

two ecclesiastical cats, one the family confessor and the other an antipathetic creature, but unluckily an indispensable adjunct of Bishop Strossmayer's. I do hope they will make Strossmayer a Cardinal. I am afraid, however, his anti-infallibility principles will be against him.

I was greatly pleased to see Mr. Hare the other day. He is doing cicerone to the young Prince of Sweden—not a very promising subject, as he don't care for pictures, and positively dislikes statues; asks if Pinturricchio was a modern artist, and what the wolf had to do with Rome.

Now I will leave an opening for Phos* to send you a quantity of messages which he has been thinking of ever since last night. Phos says: "Che desidera assai la sua venuta in Italia, in Firenze, ed in Mozzi—nella speranza Ch' Ella voglia proteggere lui e tutti i suoi cats. Intanto Rusciano aspetta con grande affetto la visita della amabile Luisa in mezzo a tutti i suoi belli fiori, e Mozzi fa altrettanto con noi. Li poi si potranno fare letture del Paradiso di Dante agli abitanti del Paradiso di

* The Duke of Sermoneta.

Rusciano, in quella compagnia di tanti anime beati, ma fra queste sara preferita quella angelica di Luisa dal suo Devotissimo ed Affezionatissimo servitore umilissimo,

“MICHELANGELO CAETANI.”

PALAZZO CAETANI,

February 11, 1879.

Pray bring your embroideries with you. I can provide you with as many workwomen as you wish, who will either give you lessons or work for you. If there is a difficulty about their going up to Rusciano, you could appoint them to work at Mozzi, and come down when it suited you to take lessons. I wish you could have been here this winter. I have increased my society of cats, and introduced into it a new category of Ecclesiastical Black Cats. Benedictine Abbots and Canons are my chief features at home, but I have perspectives of several Archbishops, and one or two Cardinals, who are still rather shy of domiciliary visits.

I asked Di Pietro if he would come to the ball here on the 12th. He said as far as he was concerned he would be delighted, but

there might be a little awkwardness if, for instance, there would be any danger of his meeting any of “quella gente di Corte!” I said, “Sicuro! Il Re e la Regina, il Duca di Genova, il Principe di Svezia e tutti quanti!” “Bagatelle!” exclaimed Di Pietro, “Io sarei scomunicato il giorno dopo!” However, he has promised to come to Cisterna on the 15th, to make *La Visita* come *Vescovo*, and confirm Leone, and later to go to Fogliano in a private capacity to enjoy himself.

We shall go on to Naples on the 17th, from Cisterna being so far on our way. We must be back at Florence by the end of the month, in order to see about everything being in order for your arrival at Rusciano. We think of nothing else, and we have had so much rain and bad weather that there is every probability of a lovely spring. But even if it was bad, Rusciano is enchanting, with its lovely views from every side, to which a few Italian clouds would only add more picturesque effects.

I have had a good deal to think about, especially my preparations for Wednesday, as we live such a very quiet life that a *grande*

decollétée toilette is rather a thought for me, and unluckily I left my lace box at Florence. However, I trust everything is settled, and after Wednesday we may rest in peace.

We were rather amused last week by a sort of communist arrangement which took place. We had had an intimation that the Queen would be glad to receive us in private audience on Saturday at 3 p.m. I had nothing fit to wear over my dress on such an occasion, so Ada* offered me one of her mantles. At the same time she received a summons to be present the next day at a grand *ricevimento* for the investiture of the *Principino*, with the Golden Fleece. She wrote to say that she had taken her train to pieces, and there was no time to make one up for the occasion. When she came home from a ball that evening, she found the Queen had sent her one of her own trains to wear on that occasion.

The next day Onorato had an invitation to join the King's shooting party at Castel Porziano. He sent an excuse, saying all his *baggaglia di caccia* was at Fogliano. A note

* Princess Teano.

came saying the King would provide him with all that was necessary, so we all appeared duly in the Royal presence in our borrowed plumes.

I am wonderfully relieved by the good accounts I hear of Henrietta and the new baby. I hope by this time we may be at rest about them ; I am glad to hear they are to go to the Mote in the spring. Emma Seymour seems to have been making a long stay there, and Mamma writes enchanted with Mrs. Wyndham, and only regretting that she missed part of her visit by being obliged to go up to London to litigate with her landlord. I suppose we shall soon be occupied in similar pursuits, for I am determined to have the *archivio*. Poor Mozzi wrote a disconsolate letter to us not long ago, asking us to help him to sell his "famous" gallery of pictures. I am told the best have been concealed, in which case it might be possible to do something, but it would be hopeless to attempt disposing of any of the crusts which I have seen there.

My Duca is not present, or he would send heaps of messages.

TO

DON M. A. CAETANI

AND

DONNA ENRICHETTA CAETANI,

DUKE AND DUCHESS OF SERMONETA,

ON THE FOURTH ANNIVERSARY OF THEIR MARRIAGE,

By C. L. H. DEMPSTER.

FLORENCE, *May 27, 1879.*

“Say, can the northern tree
Live in the South?
Or the English stranger
Speak with Roman mouth?

“Learn to love new kinsfolk,
Using Tuscan speech?
Leave home and friendships
Far out of reach?

“Fears she not in troth plight
Life’s roughest weather?
Will the sweet prayers they say
Be prayed together?

“Yes! in the Flower City
Where Dante trod,
Where the monk’s burning words
Witnessed to God.

“They in their wedded bliss,
Calm after years,
Wise in the strength of love,
Laugh at old fears.

“Love lights his darkened eyes,
Love guides her life:
Love out of friendship’s gold,
Coined ‘Man and Wife.’”

PALAZZO CAETANI,

July 13, 1879.

I write a few lines to tell you of the interesting fact that on Monday we leave Rome for Perugia. We hope to be there till the end of the week, and then go on to Florence, where I have every reason to believe that Mozzi has been in fresh troubles. Ceccarini,

the agent, suddenly telegraphed to us, to know whether he could show our apartment to a possible *compratore*, and my lawyer telegraphed to say that it would be prudent to decline, as it was probable that that was only a pretext to make a domiciliary visit to ascertain what *roba* we had belonging to Mozzi. Telegrams are very convenient under such circumstances, as they make reasons unnecessary, so we simply answered, "Impossible till our return." And no more has been heard.

Yesterday I went to the Convent of Sta. Caterina di Siena, within which is the Torre di Nerone. Cardinal di Pietro had obtained a permission from the Pope for me to visit it, as the tower belonged to the Caetani family in the time of Boniface VIII. I believe the famous Vittoria Colonna-Marchesa di Pescara lived there some time, and used to receive visits from Michael Angelo towards the close of her life.

The nuns are Dominicans; the Madre Priora charming; they were all delighted to see us (for I went with a Danish lady, Baroness von Keffenbruch). It must have been quite a fête for them. At least seven

or eight came up to the top of the tower with us, and we must have been an unusual if not a beautiful sight to those below, whilst we were enjoying the most magnificent view it was possible to imagine. It was all much finer to my mind than the view either from the Cupola of St. Peter's or the Campidoglio. I saw quantities of places I had no idea of, and looked into quantities of convents of which I had only seen the outside walls before. Altogether I feel greatly enlightened as to the general topography of Rome, especially the tops of the houses, which are adorned by a wonderful quantity of bowers and gardens.

The Madre Priora had become a nun when she was sixteen, and she said it was just forty years ago. I think our visit must have been quite an event to them.

The tower is a mass of solid brickwork up to a height corresponding with the top of the church, or, rather, the upper galleries round it, in which the nuns assist at Mass behind their lattices. From there it is a perfectly hollow square with a wooden staircase, which goes round the four sides. The walls are immensely thick, and it is lighted by two largish windows below, and then slits. We

stayed to see the sunset, and then the tower was so dark that we had to grope down the 230 steps. Up at the top there was a sort of open shed in brick—I cannot call it a bower—and a stone table with seats round it on the platform outside, from which the nuns could see the Girandola, and used to have their supper on such festive occasions.

They must have seen the King's entry magnificently, and, in fact, every great sight in Rome.

I have made the acquaintance of another tame cat, Tommasini, a young man whose history of Macchiavelli obtained the prize a couple of years ago. He is very intelligent and well educated, and lives in the Torre della Scimia, immortalized in "Transformation." I have also another semi-cat, but I am hesitating about his education, which seems to me deficient. He is secretary to the Accademia dei Lincea, and we have been civil to him on trial on Ersilia's account.

We have had lovely weather, not a drop of rain; but it must have rained in the neighbourhood, for the air is so fresh and clear, and in the evening it was too fresh to sit out on my terrace.

PALAZZO MOZZI,

August (?), 1879.

We had been three days at Paris when we got a telegram to announce Giacomo Lovatelli's death, after five days' illness of diphtheria, at the place he had just bought near Siena.

Ada and Onorato immediately started on their return to Rome, to be of whatever use they could to Ersilia. You know sufficient of our relations to understand that we cannot pretend to be sorry except for Ersilia. We feel very much indeed for her. She gives way to uncontrolled grief, but we cannot help thinking the violence of it will speedily exhaust itself.

Giacomo has left everything in confusion. . . . You may imagine that my Duca finds it rather hard to sympathize with Ersilia's grief and praises of "Quel Angelo di Giacomo," or to enter into the Mausoleum adorned with Christian paintings, which she writes to him it is her only consolation to place in his honour.

However, with great trouble it is hoped that Phos and Onorato will be able in five or six years to extricate Ersilia's affairs from

the confusion in which they are, and to stop the progress towards ruin which was already commenced.

We left Paris as soon as Phos had settled the business that brought him there. I, of course, gave up my journey to England, too thankful that I had not already started when the news came. And now we are just giving Ersilia time to calm herself a little before my Duca goes to her. Scenes agitate him dreadfully, and he has already been extremely upset.

PALAZZO CAETANI,
December 15, 1879.

I have been intending to write for an age, but have had a thousand reasons which prevented me. One has been your friend Garofolini, who has a sort of hypochondriacal malady, and thinks it a comfort to come and pay us long visits. He arrives at breakfast, and stays till we go out sometimes. As he chiefly sighs and talks of death and such topics, my Duca loses all patience with him—says he is a *uomo finito*, and that he has lost the only merit he ever had, which was of being amusing in his way; so when he gets irritable I make him go

away and leave Garofolini to me, because I feel so sorry for him, and very glad if he finds it any consolation being with me. I go on with my work, and don't find him more tiresome than a great many other people, though he does sometimes go to sleep whilst telling his own stories, and it does prevent my writing or doing other little things I want to do. This cold weather has, however, done him a great deal of good, and he is beginning to give us hopes.

Of course, I have been chiefly engrossed by my news from England lately. Aunt Charlotte sent me a telegram about my uncle's* death, which was for some time the only indication that she had been with him at the end. I got it, curiously enough, at dinner ; we had asked a few friends that evening, and Brooke Greville, who sat next me, was asking after my uncle, whom he had known in former days, when the telegram was put into my hand. I am afraid Aunt Charlotte will have been terribly upset, and doubly so, not only at having lost the only member of her family to whom she was thoroughly attached, and had been all her life, but also she must have been

* The Duke of Portland.

reminded so terribly of the great sorrow of her life. I wish you could be with her to comfort and console her, though it is very difficult for anyone to do so who has not the personal affection for him that she had, and I think no one can have that in a degree really to share her grief, though one may feel for her.

Each of the sisters comes in for about £30,000 a year, and perhaps more, but the dividends won't be paid till the end of the year, and if one dies first her portion will be divided between the survivors. My mother will lose about £6,000 a year, which Uncle Henry left her, with the condition that if she inherited at Uncle John's death it was to go to George Bentinck.

Aunt Charlotte has the house in Hyde Park Gardens for her life, but I understand unfurnished, and all his papers to keep or destroy as she thinks best.

Aunt Harriet will have the Scotch Estate (I suppose the Ayrshire). She has, apparently, already begun to economize, because she wrote she had been much troubled to arrange her mourning so as to be able to wear it in July also. Perhaps you know all this already, and more besides. I feel very curious to know

what will happen to all the jewels that Emily Cork had for her life, as she told me ; as there were no legacies, I suppose she will consider them gifts in his life. . . .

PALAZZO CAETANI,

Monday, January 5, 1880.

I was very glad indeed to get your letter ; it seemed such an age since I had heard from you, and I didn't know why. Somehow, I seem to have had less time than ever to myself this year. Onorato has been a good deal away at Fogliano, and then my Duca seems to cling more than ever to me, and as my sitting-room (the same Mrs. Denison always said she should prefer as a drawing-room) is the only one in which we have an open fireplace, and can keep up an agreeable temperature, he always brings in all his visitors to me, which is distracting when one wants to write.

Ersilia is getting quite herself again, and in tremendous spirits ; she laughs and amuses herself as if nothing had happened, and then every now and then thinks it right to talk of "Quel povero Giacomo" and the Mausoleum, much to the disgust of my Duca. As for

affairs, she says she never could understand them, but that Giacomo did everything for the best. Ersilia will not realize the state of her affairs, but says that now she is free she means to enjoy herself. As for her children, she expects they will cost her nothing, or maintain themselves! The eldest, who is in the navy, has 160 francs a month, and she flatters herself that he will do on that. He is twenty-one. The end will be that my Duca says she must find out for herself the results of Giacomo's arrangements, and when she has really felt them, and not till then, he will come forward to help, but he certainly will not do so now if all the glory is to go to Giacomo, and the cost to him.

The other day, the Contessa Malatesta pounced on us on the Pincio, and began those tiresome complimentary condolences. My Duca lost patience, and said it would be well if Ersilia could understand the gravity of her position, and what a misfortune her husband himself has been to her, etc. The Malatesta went on: "Mais enfin ce pauvre Giacomo est mort, et la mort doit nous faire pardonner tout." My Duca paused for a moment, and then replied: "Judas est mort aussi lui, mais

je n'ai jamais su que le monde lui ait pardonné pour cela !" The Malatesta took leave of us after that without offering further consolation.

The Cat* writes to me that my mother has been in very variable moods, but chiefly—to quote Cat's expression—"biting everybody's heads off." She says it is a great object to live for two years more, in order to clear herself, but in the meantime she must economize. The first economy appears to be that she will have to take a house in London for two months. She wrote me a very gracious letter, which I had this morning, asking about my plans, and regretting that Harcourt House does not go with the London property, as she would have liked to "have left the Palmyra busts and cipollino columns as heirlooms to connect our names with the past." My Duca lives in terror lest she should make us a gift of marble columns or some equally transportable article.

I have seen poor Addie Douglas.† She has let Lady Morton's apartment in Via Sistina

* Hon. Charlotte Ellis.

† Lady Agnes Douglas, daughter of the Dowager Countess of Morton.

to the Baillie Cochranes, and has taken a little furnished apartment *au 4ème* in Via Gregoriana in a sort of pension. We are afraid she cannot be as well left as we thought. We have mutually missed each other, but I have asked her to dine with us whenever she likes, and to come and stay with us at Florence on her way back to England.

There is not much going on at Rome. The Queen has just come back from Bordighera; they say she looks very pale, and is very weak. Everybody is very sorry for her; if she dies she will be a real loss.

There was some little excitement in the Senate, because the Government proposed creating 100 new Senators in order to get a majority for one of their iniquitous measures. However, V. tells me that has been given up. He himself seems devoted to hunting, and dedicates himself to chaperoning Ada—some say to qualify himself to pronounce on the new Legge della Caccia, which is to come before the Senate, others in order to be able to sell his horse. He made a speech in the Senate which has been much praised “*ma non conchiude niente.*”

Monsignor Capecelatro has given me his new

work “La Vita di San Filippo Neri,” which I read to my Duca. I don’t care as much for it as I did for his “Santa Caterina”—it is too contemplative and ascetic. My Duca says, “Il Capecelatro ha fatto di San Filippo una forchetta per pigliare l’ ascetismo,” because in fact there was very little that was not known already to be added to this biography, except his “considerazione.”

I am so glad to think you are going to Ossington. I am sure it will be a great comfort to Aunt Charlotte. I hear from those who have seen her that this has been a dreadful blow to her, and I can quite believe it. What you told me you had heard about the will is quite correct. I had all the particulars after I wrote to you from Aunt Harriet, who sent me also various letters on the subject. Please to let us know how you find Aunt Charlotte. My Duca sends so many *saluti*, but is not able to send a special message, as Ersilia and Annibale Bouladori are now occupied with him, one on each side.

PALAZZO CAETANI,

February 14, 1880.

I received your letter at Naples, for which I was very grateful, as it was full of all sorts of

interesting news which I particularly cared to hear. Aunt Har. was wonderfully well, and seemed fifteen years younger than in the autumn. She talks of going to Sorrento in May, so I hope I shall not miss her, as I dare say she will be at Paris in June when I go back. I really believe in my going this time, and I think I shan't put down my carpets in the yellow room at Florence in consequence, as I shall be barely there two months. We are thinking of going there next Thursday, and to-night I have been preparing for a farewell party of about fifty tame cats, the first we have given this year, as we have only had intimate dinners and half a tea this winter on account of our mourning. It seems to have glided away wonderfully quickly and cosily, however, and I am almost sorry to leave for Florence. Only that is my first step towards England.

We were just in time to see our children* dressed for a fancy ball at the Duchessa Cesarini's the day after we returned from Naples. Giovanella was ideal in a real Japanese dress that Mrs. Kennedy had sent. You never saw such a dignified little darling,

* Grandchildren.

and so pleased with herself. She burst into tears when her cloak was put on for her to go to her ball, as it hid her beautiful dress. Gelasio, the baby, however, was the great success as an Amore in a pink maillot, and a little blue satin petticoat and wings. He ran about everywhere, and when the Principino's quadrille was to be danced as an open space was left before the Queen, he rushed up to her and took up his place at her knee to see better! We did not go to the ball, but were quite content to see our five beautiful children dressed for it. I am sure there could have been none prettier.

Our fortnight at Naples was very pleasant. I went every day to Aunt Har., and I saw three churches which I had not seen before, and San Martino, where there is a very interesting museum, to say nothing of the view, and also Lady Strahan's villa. We saw several friends—the Duchessa Ravaschiera, Prince Filangieri, Lady Holland, and others, so that it did very well.

PALAZZO MOZZI,
April 2, 1880.

Here everything is bursting into leaf and flower visibly. We have one lovely day and one rainy one—sometimes hot and sometimes cold ; snow on the distant mountains, till within three or four days ago, and the trees equally white with blossom. I think of this time last year, and am almost as excited at the idea of being in England and seeing you all in less than a month as I was when I was expecting you. I think of leaving Florence about the 20th and being in England the Monday following, if all goes well. My Duca will leave for Rome at the same time that I shall—that is to say, I go north at eight, and he will go south at ten in the evening. It seems really all realizable.

Everybody talks of nothing but the sale of S. Donato. Things go for fabulous prices. I should have liked to have bought a tooth of the first Napoleon and sent it to Dunn my dentist, if it had gone for twenty francs, but it fetched 120 !

Some say Demidoff is ruined, others that he is going to fit up Pratolino with still greater magnificence.

What greatly interests me now is that the Palazzo Mozzi is to be sold by auction in June or July. I have given instructions to my *avvocato* to see whether it will be worth my buying it. It would be an interest to possess Mozzi.

I shall most likely have to be back here for the event ; but, at all events, I hope to be able to stay in England till June.

PALAZZO MOZZI,
October 18, 1880.

I was delighted to get your letter with the account of the Gran Gatta's visit to you, which diverted my Duca immensely, especially when he heard of her new sobriquet of "The Chaplain." I had a letter from my mother just before, saying Pussy had been extremely pleased with her visit to you, but that unfortunately she never could distinguish whether people were as pleased with her as she was herself. However, in this case, the Gran Gatta, I think, may consider the satisfaction mutual. I hope we shall have her out here one of these days ; if we get Mozzi, she will have plenty of scope for her energies, especially as I want to build an addition to the Camera dei Cavalli,

which would make our floor self-contained, without having to use the tower for guests. My embroideries are really progressing, and to-morrow my *ricamatrice* is to set up her *métier* again for the second curtain border for my nuns to execute, which she and I are going to begin for them, and then my Duca will take it to Rome when he goes there in November to get the necessary funds for the first deposit for the purchase of Mozzi.

The Teanos have been staying with us for a week ; then they went to Monza, and have just gone to Rome, after staying twenty-four hours with us, to pick up Leone and the rest of their things which they left here.

Ada says the Queen is much better, though not quite strong yet, and still out of spirits when not excited. One evening they played at *brehan* for a diamond and catseye pin, which the Queen gave as a prize. The Contessa Brambilla won, and she was carried in triumph round the room on a chair. Then the Queen desired her to be placed on the table, and all began to sing a Neapolitan air. Ada began to dance without thinking of what she was doing, on which all joined hands and danced *en rond*. But all this excited the Queen so much that

the next day she had constant palpitations, and had to be kept quite quiet.

V. wanted to take his wife there, and desired the Teanos to find out whether the Queen would receive her, as she had not yet been presented.

The Montereno replied that if they were staying at Milan she thought he might ask to present her. But it was rather a *gaucherie* on his part to think of doing so, and to mend matters he desired Onorato to telegraph to him *poste-restante*, and never went for his answer. I don't know how it will end.

He hopes now to be elected Sindaco of Rome. The book he was occupied about, I believe, is a philosophical one. He explained some of his views to Onorato, who thought them deficient, and proposed to lend him some of Herbert Spencer's works on the subject. V. declined, saying he thought his book would be more original if he did not read them. Perhaps it may. I expect they will turn up here one of these days.

We had Leone with us for a fortnight, enjoying himself thoroughly. He had what he called two delicious days ; one was spent all over the roof with the muratore helping to

clean it, an operation which had not been performed for twenty-five years. The other was spent in lunching with the Murrays and going to the Palazzo delle Scimie, a show of learned animals. He did not know which was most delicious. He thought, on the whole, cleaning the roof.

Then he occupied himself very much with the Princess Gin di Li ringing all the bells, especially the great cracked one of the court to rouse her in the morning. His delight was intense when heads appeared at every window, begging him to respect her slumbers. He replied, "I am up, so she ought to get up; she is lazy." At last, he was ringing an ancient historical cow-bell of the Medicis, which the Gran Gatta had given me, out of the window, when the string broke and it fell into the court and was broken into thirty-three fragments. Leone came quite disconsolate to tell us the misfortune, and his grandfather suggested that after an hour he should go and toll the great bell of the Cortile for the funeral of the little bell! You may imagine the result. We hardly realize the quiet of the house since he has been gone. I must end, as the *avvocato* Pampaloni is just come about the sale of Mozzi,

and Sir James Hudson at the same time, so I can only add my Duca's *saluti* of the most tender description.

PALAZZO MOZZI,

FLORENCE,

November 12, 1880.

I am going to write to you in a hurry during the few minutes that remain before dinner, after which we are going to call on Madame D'Affry, who asked us to come in at eight this evening.

She arrived from Perugia to-day, having been to visit her daughter's tomb at Castellamare.

My Duca has been away at Rome for a week arranging his affairs, and came back on Tuesday.

He has been operating great seductions on my nuns at Santa Caterina di Sienna, and actually breakfasted with them inside the convent by permission of the Cardinal Vicario—a great thing.

Aunt Har. was here for ten days, and left in great spirits. At Rome all those who saw her declared she was quite wonderful. She is going back to the same apartment she has always had at Naples, and as Tyrrell announced

with his accustomed solemnity, her ladyship is disposed to make no change in her mode of life.

I have been very busy selling some of Mozzi's old china, and I have realized altogether between 12,000 and 13,000 francs. I hope altogether to put together about 25,000 or perhaps even 30,000 lire for him. Most of it is the result of what the Gran Gatta helped to save for him when she was with us.

The *vendita* of the palace is still to be held on the 22nd of this month, and for a fortnight more we shall not know to whom it will remain, even if it is not sent to a second *asta*.

Other news we have very little. . . .

PALAZZO MOZZI,
December 7, 1880.

I write a few lines in haste, as I have heaps to do, but this is to thank you for your sympathy about Mozzi.

We are still in suspense about its fate. The decisive day was to have been to-day, but I hear the last *incanto* has been put off till Thursday, as it seems there are others ready to make the *aumento del sesto*, or offer 22,000 lire more.

I shall be glad for poor Mozzi's sake, as not only the poorer creditors will perhaps get paid, but there may even be a few thousand lire to keep him from starvation in his last days. We can hardly hope, however, that he will have as much as three francs a day to keep himself and his daughter on.

En attendant, another palace has been held out as a possibility. It is likely to go for next to nothing, but requires 40,000 francs to be laid out on it. It is extremely ancient to look at from outside, in the style of the lower part of the Palazzo Vecchio. You see the traces of arches which have been bricked up, and little windows made out of great ones, without any symmetry. I amuse myself with looking at it, and wondering what it can be like inside. I am afraid it will be full of bad smells, and awfully hot in summer. It is full south on the Arno.

The accounts of Ada are very much better to-day. It is the end of the second period. It is probable that the fever will run its course with ups and downs till the twenty-one days are over. I think we shall go to Rome next week if all goes on well. I don't think we should be any use now.

ROME,
January 17, 1881.

The Caetani hospital is going on pretty well. Ada is able to leave her room, and even to walk to the next one. They have given her quinine, which has apparently cut the fever, and she has been free from it for the last few days—in fact, she is getting on as well as could be expected, though she is worn to a shadow. My Duca, too, is really better, though he still coughs terribly at times, and is very weak, but he no longer suffers such pain. Unluckily, I have been in bed for the last eight days with the same cough, spitting blood, and not able to talk, so, instead of taking care of him, he has been taking care of me. Costantino has also been in bed for about a fortnight, so he has had altogether a bad time of it. Our cook, ditto, with a sprained ankle. But we are all getting better now, I am thankful to say, and I hope in a day or two to be able to see Ada. My Duca has several times visited her.

Including legs and sprained ankles, there have been eighteen on the sick list in the house since Ada was taken ill.

PALAZZO MOZZI,

FLORENCE,

January 18, 1883.

I am sure you will forgive me for not having written before. Since the last fatal *rechute* came I have been like one in a horrible dream.

I cannot even now command myself enough to go back to those terrible days. Onorato behaved with a heartlessness and want of feeling which I should hardly have given him credit for, and I was too glad to leave the Palazzo Caetani as soon as I possibly could. The apartment there is left to me for my life, but eight hours after his father's death Onorato sent me word that I might remain in it till the summer, when he should require it for the use of his children ! I should not have cared anyhow to remain, but to be turned out of the place in that manner made me feel very irate.

The Teanos all went off to Fogliano quite early the morning after the funeral, on the third day after it happened, without my seeing any of them, or even knowing their plans. The Maestro di casa then told my servants they were free to go if they liked, and a lot of petty annoyances followed, so I packed up everything that belonged to me and came off

to Florence as soon as I could. And here, at least, I am in perfect peace and rest, and hope soon to be able to forget all those little disagreeables and give myself up entirely to his memory.

I am beginning by collecting every little souvenir of him, every little work of his, and arranging all in a sort of museum in the room he occupied last. That and the packing and unpacking have obliged me to exert myself a little. But it is terrible when I can sit down and begin to realize, and it will go on getting worse and worse as soon as I am no longer obliged to do something actively. I am in all the troubles, too, of starting my household without knowing what I shall be able to reckon upon, or whether I shall have anything from Casa Caetani for the next year. The expenses seem endless, and my powers of thinking seem gone all at once. If I think, I can only think of him, and sit down and cry.

I have no courage to go out or to see anyone.

In the evening I look at an immense basketful of letters I have still to answer, and I try to write some of those that I mind least.

The Murrays come sometimes, but I cannot

bear to see anyone else. They wanted me to go to them in the evening, but I have not the courage to go without him. I find myself constantly going to the window to watch for him coming back from his morning walk, as he used to like me to do, and then it is terrible to awake to the feeling of reality.

Later, when I get back my strength and nerves a little, I think it will be a comfort to feel that he is with me in the spirit, and watching over me constantly.

I can write no more to-day. I am sure you will understand.

PALAZZO MOZZI,

May 7, 1885.

I write a few lines to-day to say that all is not yet over with poor Cesarino,* and, indeed, there is a shade of hope. Yesterday, Dr. Rossi thought the end was not far, and advised that the priest should be sent for, and the sacraments administered. They fetched the Parroco di San Niccolo, but Cesare took fright, and would not have anything to say to him. He was by way of being a friend, but, as I was told, “non hanno potuto intendersi.” Later, my

* The Duchess's coachman.

Canonico came to see me, and I told him all about it. He said he would go "da parte mia"; so I said do, and tell Cesare to be of good heart; the illness is very serious, but not without hope; and how can we expect the blessing of God on the work of the doctor if we do not ask it of Him and fulfil our duties? The good Canonico was able to persuade Cesare, and all was done at once. He was much quieter, the night was very bad, but Rossi thought there was a slight improvement this morning, and says we may just hope. I wrote to put everybody off yesterday. I said I had not the heart to receive people with this impending, and all my household were in constant requisition.

My dear Louisa, I miss you most dreadfully; my only consolation is that you are spared this anxiety about poor little Cesarino. I shall be so glad to hear about your journey, and the *volatile chiu*, and whether the Pussy Cat comes to meet the owl in its beautiful peagreen cage. It seems quite a dream not having you here. I keep thinking you are at the Pitti, and Rossi's visits to me in the morning are very different from yours.

PALAZZO MOZZI,
Monday, 1885.

I was delighted to get your letter and to hear all your home news. So many thanks for all you have done on my behalf, especially all the trouble you have taken about the *Memoria*. . . .

Mr. Wells leaves for England on Friday with all the Royal Family of Teck. I dare say you will very soon see him in London.

The Tecks are all coming to dine with me—a family party—to-morrow. Sir Thomas Dick Lauder, Della Stufa, and the Torrigiani Frys are to meet them. We shall be ten, and dine in the blue drawing-room, which does very well. Lady Marian Alford has lent them her house in London till they can find one that suits them, or till someone else lends them another.

Wednesday.—My letter was interrupted, and I had so much to do that I could not finish it before. My dinner went off fairly well. The children did not come, which rather put out my arrangements, but Carlo and Anna made themselves much at home and discoursed fluently. Princess Mary told us ghost stories after dinner, and Mr. Wells carried the men off to smoke in the little dining-room. Teck

had been to Doccia in the morning to visit the Ginori, and had got a chill, and complained much of the cold. Mr. Wells had put such stress on my not having fires that I had not had the one in the Chinese room lighted as I should have done, though I had one lighted in their smoking-room.

I have heard no more about my *causa*. It may come on this week, Corsi thought, and he will be at Rome himself this time, though he says he has nothing more to do.

Poor Miss Lawley writes that they have lost their lawsuit, which will make a great difference to them—the younger children will have about £300 a year instead of £800. I don't know about Lady Wenlock. I am very sorry for them, all the more as the judgment had been given in their favour just before they left.

I feel as if I had so much to tell you. Stufa particularly desires to be remembered to you.

Yesterday, there was still a good deal of snow on the Vallombrosa Hills, and more towards Pistoja and Carrara. I think so often of you. It will be very pleasant, looking back constantly to your visit here, and I feel I shall be able to tell you so much now that you will care to hear.

PALAZZO MOZZI,

Saturday, June, 1885 (?)

I ought to wait a few days longer, but I really cannot, to give you the news that the *causa* has come on definitely at last. The sentence will not be published for some days yet, but I feel like the passenger who is coming into Dover Harbour after a rough passage from Boulogne.

I believe there is every reason to think that I may *sgombrare* from the Via Abbipazienza into Borgo Allegre.

But it will only be next week, or about June 12, that we expect the sentence to be published.

I feel such a wish to begin to ring my bells, but have to remember the Monks of Brinkburn Priory and their legend, that when the band of spoilers had hunted in vain for the priory, and had at last withdrawn, the monks in their joy rang a peal of triumph, which the enemy heard, and returned, and this time found and plundered it!

So it might be with me if I sounded my bells too soon, and it is only waiting a very little while longer now. Of course, the adversaries will go, if defeated, into Cassazione,

which will take at least another six months, or perhaps a year, and then there will be the *perizias*! But it is the moral triumph I care for, and if I get that I don't care for the rest.

Even if we lost in Cassazione, I shouldn't mind, as long as it is shown clearly how right I was when I thought I had it in my hands to make a great gift, and deserved some gratitude for letting the question rest, thereby not even exacting thanks for the gift, but only asking that as I respected whatever dispositions my husband had made—legal or not—so his wishes should also have been respected by his son.

PALAZZO MOZZI,

FLORENCE,

July 5, 1885.

Is it possible that I did not write to you as soon as the sentence was published? I fancy I must have confused my letter to Lou Canning with the one I meant for you, as both Lous have been staying with me, and consequently know all my ins and outs better than anyone else.

Yes, my sentence is published, but we haven't got a copy yet; there is, however, no doubt, and no cause for silence or patience!

Thank goodness ! both mine were worn transparent.

Corsi is gone to Rome on his business as well as mine. When he comes back I believe the sentence is to be published at length in some of the Italian papers, and we were thinking of having a little report of it prepared for the English papers. It will save me a deal of writing.

Onorato will, of course, go to Cassazione. He has three months to think about it, and we have two to prepare our answer. Then I suppose we may look for another six months before our final sentence.

When Corsi comes back from Rome we are to have our dinner of congratulation. It will chiefly consist of the Castagnolo party ; Marzials ; Cullum, a sculptor and pupil of Gibson's ; and Placci. Almost everyone else has left by this time.

I think I shall go to Rome the second week in July. I must systematize my twenty-eight families, and my nuns are in despair, as they are going to be ejected, and don't know where to go.

Also I must visit my sisters-in-law, the nun on the Palatine and the Marchesa Longhi.

Onorato had been making a long speech at the Geographical Society last week, and I am waiting to go till I know he and his family are gone. It is possible that he may have to stay on a little longer about this business, and I don't want to go as if I was triumphing !

Cesarino is making steady progress now. He had a relapse about a fortnight ago which gave me a great fright, but he seems to be going on well now.

Scirocco is gradually recovering the use of his legs. I am told they are to be *gambe di ferro* ! At present they might be of cotton-wool for the good I have of them. He is taking baths in the Arno, and, as it seems part of his cure was never to lie down for twenty-three days, it is supposed he will have forgotten the little education he ever had !

I feel very low about going to Rome the first time alone. I think I shall go to the Minerva to be near the Longhis and Serventis, and it is near all that part where we used so constantly to take our walks together.

Then there will be the visit to the lonely grave at S. Lorenzo, and to the nun on the Palatine. I hardly know how I shall get over it, but it must be done sooner or later, and the

twenty-eight families will be an occupation and a distraction.

Princess Carolath* gave a party up at the Villino last week with a military band and ices, etc., but a violent thunderstorm burst out just as the band began, and hardly anyone went, I was told. I didn't go, as I had no idea of getting soaked in the garden, and Féf  was barking all round the house in the most vicious manner !

HOTEL DELLA MINERVA,

ROME,

July 27, 1885.

It was awful coming back alone to Rome, especially at first ; but it is *Roma mia* after all, and somehow even more home than Florence. It was coming home to my own blue sky and the oleanders and pomegranates in flower on every housetop as I first saw them, when he brought me home after my marriage, and I

* The new owner of Palazzo Mozzi lived chiefly in a *villino* at the top of the garden, where she kept a number of enormous fierce dogs, of whom F    was chief favourite. Owing to these dogs it had become impossible to walk in the garden without being accompanied by the porter, who filled his pockets with bones, and whenever a dog loomed in the distance a bone was thrown to pacify and propitiate it.

thought I had never seen anything so beautiful as Rome in the summer.

On Saturday I went to S. Pietro, in Montorio, where I used always to go with him. I went by moonlight—it was lovely, everything so grown and so peaceful ; only the trees shut out my favourite view, and I was alone. Yesterday, I went to S. Peter's to Vespers, as we used always to do, and that, too, was almost too much. Don Pietro Tailetti was there, and came to meet me. He said the day before he had been reading over our last letter to him, and it seemed like an apparition to see me there. I have visited my three monasteries and been embraced by thirty-one nuns. I have seen my two sisters-in-law and three or four nieces, and a couple of nephews-in-law, and the Capecelattos, and the new Cardinal Monsignor Alfonso Capecelatro, our great friend, and Malusarde the doctor and some of our old friends ; everybody receiving me with open arms and screams of surprise. To-night I hold a family reception. I am to go to Palo on Wednesday for the day, to stay with Elena Serventi and see my grandnieces.

I have also seen one of my *procurati*, Giordani. He says, if our chances in Appello were 80 per

cent., as he always held, they are 95 per cent. in Cassazione. I hear my *Memoria* made a prodigious effect, for the calm and gentleman-like style in which it was written, as well as the immense erudition which Corsi displayed. The Minister of Grace and Justice sent to France for some of the works quoted. All my *Memorias* were exhausted at once, and everyone is asking me for copies. The *Memoria* is to be reprinted with the sentence.

The sentence is especially careful of my husband's name, and declares he had perfect right to do what he did. Only from the nature of the constitution of the Fedecommeso the act could only be a donation during his life.

Many other similar cases had been settled before, but always by means of compromises with the heirs, as they were considered as coming under the Provisions of the Code, which enforced the equal division of the "meta non disponibile" amongst all the heirs. Mine is the first that went to the Tribunals. The *Times* correspondent wants to notice it as a question of international interest, as well as one affecting all the great Roman families.* I

* The Court of Appeal at Rome has given an important decision in a case which will probably be quoted as a precedent in property questions connected with the aboli-

am very comfortable here, and my apartment vast and reasonable. My predecessor, a Bishop,

tion of the law of primogeniture. In the year 1875, the Hon. Harriet Ellis, eldest daughter of the late Lord Howard de Walden, married the Duke of Sermoneta, and on his death became, according to Italian law, entitled as his widow to take a life interest in the proportion of one-sixth of the income his estates yielded. The pecuniary interest involved was large. The late Duke, Don Michael Angelo, had, however, during his lifetime, and at the moment when the Bill for the Abolition of Primogeniture was before the Italian Parliament, made over the entailed estates to his son, Don Onorato, better known as Prince Teano, retaining an annual income for himself; and the main question at issue was the right claimed by the widow to have a certain portion of the value of the disentailed property included in the total of the patrimony upon the value of which her *quota* was to be determined. This was disputed by Don Onorato, the present Duke, in whose favour sentence was given in the Court of First Instance, but that decision has now been reversed by the Court of Appeal, which has pronounced in favour of the claim made by the Dowager Duchess, and has decreed that one-half the value of the disentailed property shall be brought into the total. As will be recognized, the case involves a question of considerable importance to all the great feudal houses of Rome, and it is of general interest both in England and Italy, not only in consequence of the social position of the parties, but because of a prevalent idea in England. This decision of the Court of Appeal has refuted the idea that justice is unattainable between Italians and foreigners, and especially in a case like the present, in which the defendant is the head of a powerful Roman house possessing great wealth and political influence.

left a strong smell of tobacco, but I conquered that with saucers of disinfectants under the consoles and lumps of camphor in all the arm-chairs.

The Grand Duchess of Tuscany was here a little while ago—food very good ; I dine by myself in a painted hall full of statues whenever I please.

Rome, with its demolitions and constructions, is wonderful. Those two horrid little lanes of streets, the Via del Sudario and Cesarini, have been demolished into a sort of boulevard, with houses eight or nine stories high, and the new Viale from S. Pietro in Montorio to S. Onofrio is enough to take away your breath with its beauty, the old ilexes of the Corsini gardens and the walks and the flowers, *pare impossibile* that they should have done so much, and the Foro Romano.

It was very hot, but we have had some delicious *burrascas*.

PALAZZO MOZZI,
FLORENCE,

August 28, 1885.

I feel dreadfully hot and stupid, though the thermometer is only up at seventy-six, yet there

is a horrid scirocco, and we have just had a thunderstorm, which makes it feel more oppressive than ever. I was so busy before leaving Rome I hadn't time to write, but just sent you a copy of the *ristampa* of the *Memoria*, with the sentence and Corsi's latest notes.

Monday, I finished all my *Expompiere*. Tuesday from 7 a.m. till eleven at night was engaged in going to Palo. On Wednesday I had a succession of visitors of all sorts from ten in the morning to six in the afternoon, and then I had to go to my convents, the day before I left to take ante-leaves, for it seems that at Rome one has to take leave of everybody about three times over, and as my nuns couldn't come to me, I had to take and retake leave of them twice over. Thursday, I packed and went to my convent and the Marchesa Longhi, and then started for Florence. I rather wonder that I am alive. It was a great trial going to Rome, but it has been an enormous consolation. All my nieces were delighted to see me, and the children all learnt to call me Zia Enrichetta. There were seven or eight of the grandnieces and nephews, besides four married and two unmarried nieces, the respective

nephews-in-law, and my two sisters-in-law. I have promised to be to all of them what my husband would have been, and they have most of them expressed a desire to come and visit me at Florence. I am glad I have not more room.

I finished the whole of my personal visits to my twenty-eight families* of *Expompieri* before I left Rome. The stairs were awful in some instances—so disgustingly dirty; insects abounded. It seems to me to be quite curious to be free from the hopping of fleas since I have been back here.

I have just had a telegram announcing the sudden death of my sister-in-law, the Marchesa Longhi, this morning. Poor thing! I am glad I was able to go and see her, and I think I was a comfort to her, especially when I promised to look after her daughters.

* The Duke of Sermoneta had formed a fire brigade in Rome in which he took the greatest interest, and the twenty-eight families mentioned as having been provided for by the Duchess were the families of these men.

PALAZZO MOZZI,

FLORENCE,

October 14, 1885.

I cannot the least remember when I last wrote to you. I was a week at Cadennabbia, and oh, how lovely it was! We visited your friend Mr. Long's house, and I thought it charming, and we found a number of people that we knew, more or less. Then I came back here in a hurry to get ready for the Beaumonts, and I have had them with me for three weeks—Mr. Beaumont, Margaret, Burga Weyland, and finally Hubert Beaumont, who was sequestered for four days on his way out to join us, because a French lady, who had been eating too much fruit in the train, was attacked by *symptômes suspects*, so the waggon was detached and all the occupants of that compartment bundled out and marched off to a cottage, where they were completely isolated, and permitted no communication whatsoever with the outer world. You may imagine the state we were in, knowing that Hubert had left London on Friday morning, and till the following Thursday no news of him reached us. Eventually he turned up on Friday night, and was

received with open arms. It was perhaps all for the best, as he had got into a scrape at Oxford and been sent down, and his father was thinking of speaking very seriously to him. But the anxiety we were all in about him made us too glad when he did turn up to do anything but *festeggiare* him. I took Margaret to most of our drives, and we also went to the Vintage at Castagnolo, and once or twice drove down there besides. I think I shall have to leave this. My Princess is too tiresome. They talk of making me go up the back stairs and bricking up the garden door to prevent my getting into it, though I am sure I go there little enough—a lot of similar petty tyrannies and *dispetti*. She is away now, and her two *maestros di casa* do just what they like. They ordered the light on my stairs to be put out, and three times I sent for Casaglia about different things, and he neither came nor sent any answer, though he comes every day to the house.

Then we were *allagati*. Sheets of water came pouring down from the garden, as they had deviated the course of the *scoli*, to prevent the rain-water getting into the stables; so it all came into the corridor from the garden, and we

had about six inches of water in the chapel and sacristy and all down the passage, and after a fortnight it is not yet dry. The rain came in in all directions. The *muratore* came up, said there was a *guasto*, and went away and never came back. He is working for the Princess in the garden, and says I must wait till the fine weather before he can repair the roof. So my patience was exhausted, and I had an inspiration. I had several bricks loosened in various places where the rain came in, and then we poured cans of water in the places, and from the opposite windows we soon had the gratification of seeing pools of water in the Princess's bedroom and toilette. An animated discussion with the *maestro di casa* took place in the *cortile* this morning, when the result of our little arrangements was discovered, and presently a message came up to know if the *muratore* had been. I replied no, but there was no hurry now, we had provided for the present.

To-morrow we expect a further scene, as we have continued our little arrangements very satisfactorily, taking advantage of the rain, which has been incessant.

On Saturday, the *ricorso* in Cassazione was served on me. They have added the Ex-

Minister Mancini to the number of their *difensori*, and he qualifies the sentence as a specimen of *fenomenale assurdita*. Corsi says I need not mind. They have not been able to bring forward anything but cavils, and he thinks the sentence will stand. He seems most comfortable and confident.

PALAZZO MOZZI,
November 22, 1885.

I am really going to leave Mozzi after all. It must be, and the Princess has been so nasty that she has helped me to come to a decision. I showed Corsi our correspondence on the subject of my going or staying, and he was much amused. He thought the *maestro di casa's* letter in answer to my first letter to the Princess most absurd as well as insolent, and it gave no definite answer to whether she would let me give up the apartment by May, and that I could not do better than leave a house so conducted. The last episode was that I wrote to the Princess to say that, as I had no answer to my application three months ago, to renew my lease for another year, or to either of my letters offering to leave May 1, instead of November 1, if that would suit

her better, I withdrew my offer, and should not leave till my lease was up on November 1. To this, at last, she wrote me a note, saying she did not wish to be rude, although she thought she had a right to it; therefore she had kept my letter, though she should never read it; that my two others were unintelligible, and therefore she begged I would not write again.

The next day a letter came from the *maestro di casa* so I returned it unopened; and the day after it began to pour in torrents, and all the water went down in floods to the floor below, through our apertures, and we saw them holding conferences of hours, and the German *maestro di casa* inspecting the pools, little aware that all they did was seen by us. We have not opened the reserves yet, and she little suspects the reservoirs that are suspended over her devoted head the first time she comes to sleep downstairs. We can make apertures wherever we like, and they can't foresee where the danger will come from. However, we mean to be lenient, unless there is a further provocation.

I think I shall come over to England in March to see Aunt Charlotte, and return after

May to make the *sgombero*. I think I shall certainly take the Palazzo Ferroni, in the Via dei Serragli, close to the Ponte alla Carraja.

I shall hope to see you there some day. It won't be dear Mozzi, with all its recollections of eight years of happiness and sorrow, but still it will be a charming place, except in the worst winter months, when I think it may be cold, and all Florence is full of associations and recollections.

I saw Sir Thomas Dick Lauder the other day, but I have only just begun to pay visits. I go very often to the Forbes, and sometimes to the Torrigianis, but I am very lazy about visits, and Scirocco has had several attacks of lameness. We are very desponding about his legs. To-day I had an inspiration, which was that if he don't get better I shall part with him and Libeccio to the Pompe Funebre. Black horses with long tails are greatly sought after of their size, and they will be sure to be well treated, and not overworked or rattled about, so my poor little Scirocco will run no risk of being maltreated.

I must end now, though I feel I had so many things to tell you. I wish I could think of your coming out to me soon again.

My *causa* will come on, Corsi thinks, in January. He is very sanguine, and so is Giordani.

Cat has sent me two photos of her palace. What a pity she does not call it Katzenellenbogen! She seems to have so much elbow-room about it.

PALAZZO MOZZI,
January 12, 1886.

I ought to have written before to have thanked you for your Christmas greetings, which I really thought were going to bring the best fulfilment in the settlement of the *causa* in an amicable manner.

But, as you will have heard from my letters to Aunt Charlotte, all that seems to have been a snare and a delusion.

I suppose I shall hear more from Corsi after the 15th, when he goes to Rome.

You ask me about my Principessaccia. I don't think she really knows what she wants. Respectable people, I hear, all refuse to receive her in Florence. This I did not know before, but she has made herself such a name that she is considered impossible. That, I fancy, has embittered her, and she revenges herself by

persecuting her dependents and giving herself sovereign airs. And, counting on my attachment to the place, she thought she could make me put up with any caprices or insolences on her part. I have behaved like an angel, and not made use of any of my waterworks, and I carefully avoid meeting her, or holding any communication with her. But one of her latest inventions is when she comes home from her drive to have the great door of the *cortile* shut, and make the porter carry up her things, so one is kept waiting outside twenty minutes or more before one can get in! I don't mind for myself so much as for my friends.

In the meantime my house-hunting continues, and I feel like Minny. I always fancy I want so little for myself, but so much is wanted for my friends and household.

The latest fancy is for the Palazzo Tolomei in Via dei Serragli. I nearly like it very much, and I think by pulling down the ground floor to make an arcade, and building up the top floor into a loggia, and planting the court all round with Banksia roses, and jessamines, and magnolias, and wistarias, and camellias, and fig-trees, it might become poetical.

I have been twice up to dine with the Scotts, and feel that hill an awful trial of friendship and horses' legs at night. Indeed, I have been undergoing a *corso sforzoso* of Alpine dinners lately at Bellosguardo and Arcetri, and have pitied myself very much. But I also pity myself for having accepted a dinner with the Vernons at the Palazzo Canegiani. It is so ridiculously near for the carriage, and yet, if it rains or snows, just too far to walk in evening dress.

Cesarino seems really strong and well, but I always consider him in the light of a cracked teacup—liable to come to pieces on slight provocation. Scirocco's legs are also very delicate, and we have quite decided to present the pair to the Funeral Poms when I leave, and get a strong pair instead, even if I have to sacrifice colour and tails. They do make a very pretty *pariglia*, and there isn't another like them in Florence.

I made acquaintance with a very interesting American the other day—a Mr. Fisk—who has every edition of Petrarch that has ever been published except one, and I think him very pleasant and agreeable. And he has such a pretty house—a Bourbon del Monte villa.

I have greatly enlarged my horizons since you were here. You will have to come again some day and see all I have discovered. I was glad to hear . . . It always is a great boon to be able to give while it lasts, but, I think, a great responsibility. I find the more I have, the more I have to give, and the less to spend on fancies. This year, I think, I have had to do without clothes, except two white dresses to visit my poor in, that I might see all the fleas on them, and a muff and a bonnet. But I have clothed heaps of others.

Only the worst is that they are always wanting more, and when so many want so much one gets quite disheartened.

PALAZZO MOZZI,
January 26, 1886.

Your letter was a real comfort to me, and it was an immense pleasure to hear all about Ossington and Aunt Charlotte, and Wallington and Nora Trevelyan—the brightest spots that I look back to (besides Bretton and Margaret Beaumont) in my visit to England two years ago. That visit brought out all the old remembrances which had got dimmed and dulled with time, as a coat of varnish brings a

picture to life again when it has been gradually fading away into one general dusky hue.

Wallington is, as you say, very bright and cheerful indoors always, whatever it may be outside, and it is a real pleasure to see Nora's devotion to Sir Charles,* their happiness, and her active life—full of usefulness and kindness to all about her.

I dare not look forward to the possibility of a change, and I feel what that change will be to her when it comes, as humanly speaking it must. The worst of marrying people or having friends much older than oneself is that one must look forward to losing them ; and the greater the pleasure and privilege of such intercourse the more infinite the pang and desolation when deprived of them.

I have just had a visit from Corsi on his return from Rome, and it has left me rather out of spirits and less hopeful. The *innominato* was Vera, as I suspected. He said he had met Giordani, and asked how the *causa* was going on ; and then it occurred to him that it would be a good thing to try and bring about an *accomodamento*, and so had taken the

* Sir Charles Trevelyan.

initiative of his own accord! Corsi saw him, and said the terms proposed by Onorato were not possible—that I was ready to use every *larghezza*, but that those were inadmissible. Vera said if I accepted them, and a reconciliation could be effected, “*tutte le case di Roma mi sarebbero aperte!*”

Corsi replied that I should make no difficulty about a reconciliation, but that I should certainly not purchase one; that as for the Case di Roma being opened to me, I had done nothing to justify their being closed, but that at present he did not think I had any intention of going to establish myself at Rome. I said it would be better to treat after the decision of Cassazione, and I asked what he thought of our prospects. He said he was very sanguine. I said: “And Giordani?” He replied: “Giordani is less so now.” Mancini is a great friend of Miraglia, the President of Cassazione, and Miraglia has had the *causa* put off in order that it may be discussed under his presidency—“*sotto il suo turno*”—and it has been postponed to February 26. They are both Neapolitans, and close allies, and Miraglia said the affair had been taken up by the newspapers and also the English ones, and so he wished it to be

discussed before him. I said: "Is that bad for us?" Corsi gave a shrug, and said: "Sono Napolitani!" But he would try and get De Falco, the Procuratore-General, who is a friend of his, to be one of the judges, *una brava persona*. He went away cheerfully, but I think he tried to give me courage, and somehow it has left me low, as I feel every sort of influence will be brought to bear in this matter. My house-hunt continues without yet having arrived at a culminating point. . . .

The last I heard of the Principessaccia's doings was that she had sent away a wretched companion whom she had had some time with her. She had told her never to touch her when the dog was in the room, or he would be sure to fly at her. One day she told her to bring her her stockings to change and put them on. The companion replied: "But, Princess, the dog is there. I am afraid." "Never mind, come at once." The companion accordingly knelt down to remove the Princess's stocking, and Féf  instantly flew at her and caught her cheek in his mouth. She uttered a shriek, and the Princess called off F   , caressed him, and said: "Poor dear dog! Evidently he don't like you, so you had better

go," and turned her away with a month's wages.

Sometimes when I feel how sorry I am to leave, I wish I had had more patience and put up with her fancies as I had done already, but there are constant instances of her half mad disregard of everything but her own fancies, and I could not accept her backstairs !

VILLA DELLE SELVE,

SIGNA TOSCANA,

September 11, 1886.

Your letter from Aix was most welcome, and I hasten to profit by being kept in by a most tremendous thunderstorm to write at once. I am so glad to hear that Mrs. Denison is so well. Certainly in London she looked so fragile that I thought there was little chance of her being able to move about much, and it was a real and most agreeable surprise to me to hear how successful your journey had been. My most sincere congratulations to her. There seems no reason why you should not get to Como, and I am sure you would enjoy it immensely. So should I have done, if I had been able to get away, but not only my three houses prevent my moving for pleasure, but I

think I may possibly have to go to Rome. Yesterday I heard that my last remaining Roman sister-in-law (the nun on the Palatine) is so ill that little hopes are entertained of her recovery, and I have written to say that if she wishes to see me I will go ; only as the rules of *clausura* in her convent are very strict, and she holds very much to no exception being made in her favour, if I am not to be admitted, there would be no use in my going.

I hope by this time it will be a little cooler at Aix. When it is hot there it is no joke ; only in the evenings it used to be pleasant going in a boat or driving among the vineyards.

Is Lady Whalley at the Maison du Diable ? and are the Menabreas at their villa ?

My villa is delightful, with its galleries and terraces and cypresses and views. It has its drawbacks, but, still, in Italy one can do with so little, and I could do with less. There are sixty-two hideous portraits of more hideous celebrities, the size of life, in my dining gallery. There are no bells, but I have had a handbell given me which I ring out of my window for my maid. There is a delightful old clock which strikes on the façade of the house, but

its weights go down the chimney of the fireplace in my dining gallery, which, therefore, has been suppressed. My bedroom is just under the kitchen, so I hear everything that goes on in it, and I can fancy myself in an emigrant ship getting under weigh every time a meal is being prepared. Luckily I am not much in my room at meal-times.

But the views are divine, and Countess Capelli has promised to let me have her telescope, with which I may see the hour on the Palazzo Vecchio at Florence.

It feels quite curious to me to be quiet again, and the week I have been at the Selve seems like a month—not that I have been bored yet with my books and work—and I have also brought a few sketch-books, but it feels so curious to go back to a quiet life for oneself alone.

My *padrona*, the Countess Capelli, is very nice, and seems very glad to have me as an *inquilina*. We have exchanged visits, and I dare say we shall see a good deal of each other.

One day I walked over to Castagnolo to call on the Rosses. Stufa is in waiting, so the Rosses are alone just now.

The weather has been very thick and hazy

since I have been here, and, I think, unhealthy, but we have all the air there is to have. I begin to wonder if the view will suffice me for three months. It is true that I have only been once out of the house since I came except on the terraces, but first it was too hot, then thunderstorms kept me in, then a cold from sitting in perpetual draughts for ventilation. I must end this, as it would grow more tedious the longer it grew.

VILLA DELLE SELVE,
SIGNA TOSCANA,
September 26, 1886.

It was very good of you to spare time to write in all the hurry of travelling, and I will lose no time in sending this to greet your arrival at the lovely Lake of Como. How I wish I could have been there to meet you instead!

We have had a succession of thunderstorms, then a scirocco that made one feel like a rag, and now we have a strong wind that seems to blow all round the villa, and has "proprio spazzato il cielo." The views are divine here, and the number of walks seem incredible since it has been possible to walk.

I have been exploring the pinewoods on the top of the hills ; they seem endless and quite different from those about Castagnolo. There is a *pineta* close to this villa with quarries in it, and streams and the Arno just beyond. The paths often resemble torrents so closely that you cannot tell the difference, but paths don't seem to be necessary here, and now that the vintage is over, one will be able to follow the grassy walks through the olive-grounds. The country resembles rather that about Cannes, only instead of the sea you have the Valley of the Arno.

I like my *padrona di casa* very much—Countess Capelli ; she is very quiet and nice, and we get on famously. I very often go down in the evening and sit with her, and the other day she suggested our reading aloud, so I take my Dante to her, and it is quite a pleasure to see how she enjoys it. She had never studied it before, but she happened to tell me of a visit that she had had from a Polish poet who talked to her immensely of my Duca and his knowledge of Dante, so that led to my proposing to read some of my favourite cantos to her.

I think I shall have to go up to Florence

about the second week in October to complete the final *sgombero*. But my staircase won't be finished till nearly the end of November, and I dare say I shall stay here till January, only running up occasionally.

I foresee that I may have a difficulty about warming the rooms, especially as the weights of the great house-clock go down the chimney of the fireplace in my dining gallery. But "Il y a remède a tout."

A bad smell in my bedroom was worse, for it has driven me into another, decorated with the most enormous engravings I ever saw. One of a crucifixion, with an immense figure of Death at the foot of the Cross, is close to my bed, and the first thing I see in the morning. I think it must have frightened off the mosquitoes, for there are fewer there than anywhere else.

VILLA DELLE SELVE,
SIGNA TOSCANA,

November 4, 1886.

I must thank you for your dear, sympathizing letter which I got just the morning that I left Mozzi—I suppose for ever. It was a terrible wrench, as you say—something like the last

pull to a tooth that had been shaking for a long time.

I left Palmiro in possession to finish all that had to be done, and the Principessaccia arrived on the Tuesday, so that I was spared the sight of her.

The *maestro di casa* and the porter tried to stop some of my things, on the pretext that they belonged to the house, though I had bought them, but Palmiro was equal to the occasion, and everything was done more peacefully than I could have hoped. It was great rest to come down here, and the weather was beautiful, and I walked immensely, which distracts one's thoughts, and then my Contessa is very dear, and I have been occupying myself about Fornaciari's little Proemio to the new edition of the "Tavole," with the notice of my Duca's biography, for which I furnished the materials, and that has also distracted my thoughts a little.

Yesterday I had a visit from Mr. Heathcote Long. He did not get up to the house till 4.30, and though I took him a turn round Campi's drives and cypress avenues, it was too dark to see the views to advantage, and it was the first evening that we had no sunset.

We talked a great deal about your visit. All the things you did were just what I did last September when I was there with the Beaumonts. Even the Fiera del Canestro—such a lovely day that was—and Lady Moncrieffe who was there in a plain white dress, holding in her arms a basket with two white doves which she had bought at the auction, made the loveliest picture that you could imagine, with the background and everything in harmony.

It was very pleasant seeing Mr. Long and talking about Como.

VILLA DELLE SELVE,
December 15, 1886.

It is a long time since I have been intending to write and thank you for your dear letter of sympathy about poor Johnny,* but then came the news of the other sorrow of Baby Joan's† death, and the sad accounts of the poor parent's and my mother's grief, and just about the time when all the preparations which I have to make for my anniversary bring back my own sorrow ever more vividly present, to

* Her brother Hon. John Ellis.

† Child of the Evelyn Ellis's.

join with that new one for myself as well as mine.

But I must not dwell too much now on those old and ever fresh subjects; you know too well what it is, and how one cannot forget. It is always there, however we may be able to hide it to the outside world. When one feels anything from one's real inside heart one may with time grow accustomed to the pain, but it is always there, and so your words of comfort and sympathy were doubly dear to me, for I knew that you could understand and feel for others what you had gone through yourself.

I went up to Florence on the 9th to make all the necessary preparations for the 11th. The *funzione* was, as usual, at S. Lorenzo. All our poor came, and it was very touching, and all our *artisti*; our workpeople came, too, and everyone "che aveva servito la casa." One of the Forbes and Conny Murray came also, but I had asked no friends. The first Mass was at half-past eight, and to my great surprise my Contessa came up for it, though she had been very unwell from a chill; she had to leave this at half-past six in the morning. I can't say how touched I was.

The church remained open all day, and at half-past four there was the *benedizione*, in which all joined very reverently. I like that the best. Except our chapel, which was lighted up, all the rest of the church was in darkness, and the organ played softly and solemnly, and all our little congregation chanted the responses. My own Canonico officiated. The next day I came away.

The new house promises better than I could hope, but the walls are still very damp, and most of the floors—and oh, the smell of the varnish! for all the doors and windows have been done fresh. There are, of course, no carpets or curtains anywhere, so all is very bare. Palmiro came to ask where I wished fifteen pairs of white curtains and as many coloured to be put up, and about thirty ward-
robes? I felt bewildered, and said, of course, according to their sizes, but the number of measures was worse than an avalanche, and I said: “For Heaven’s sake let them alone till I come back, and give a week to them.” I felt disposed to fly from carpets and curtains into the depths of the desert, and the smells of *gesso* and varnish hastened my flight hither. The other smells seemed most satis-

factory ; one could perceive nothing but varnish.

I hope by January to be dry, and then get by degrees into living order.

PALAZZO TOLOMEI,
VIA DEI SERRAGLI 17,
FLORENCE,
January 3, 1887.

I was delighted to get your long letter, though at the same time I have been filled with remorse, thinking I must have left your last unanswered. But you must forgive me, for I have been through so much with my installation. No one can conceive what it has been. There was so much to do upstairs, and owing to the damp and scirocco which prevailed through November, and the snow in December, nothing would dry, so we could not get anything into place.

But though only the great outlines are defined, the apartment looks magnificent, and by degrees, as I live in each room, it will take an aspect of comfort and individuality.

Everyone admires it immensely, and, indeed, I get nothing but compliments and congratulations on the change. Still my heart goes

back to dear old Mozzi, where I spent so many happy hours—years, I might almost say. But the Principessaccia spoilt everything, so that it had ceased to be what it was, and so I must content myself with the souvenirs which, after all, reconstitute one's life, and which are attached to almost everything I possess, and with which I can surround myself still.

I had a domestic revolution about a fortnight ago. Everybody had aggravated me by making demands on me one after the other, more unreasonable each than the preceding one; and then they rebelled against Palmiro, so I announced at last that I was wearied out. Between the Municipio and the *tassa di famiglia* and the *sgombero*, and their grumbles, my life was a burden to me, and I should just send everyone away, shut up the house, and go! For five days I remained firm, and asked for *indicatori*, and chose my trunks, and when they really believed I was in earnest I relented, and said I should put off going till the spring, if I wasn't worried any more.

I was so glad to hear about Nora Trevelyan, and that she is thinking of coming to me; all

I have heard from her was when I was at Signa, that February would suit her as well as December. I have suggested later, if she wishes to make country expeditions, for wild horses won't drag me to out-of-the-way holes in bad weather, and nothing will induce me to go touring in the winter. It will be a comfort to stay quiet a little while after all the trouble of my *emmenagement*.

I was much amused by seeing a review of Mr. Arnold White's book in the *Spectator*, in which they compared his style to Ouida's. It seems from that and other notices I have read of it to have a great deal of good in it and much that is crude. Reformers generally are for energetic measures at first, and then by degrees the torrent that carries everything before it gets weaker, spreads, and loses itself in sand and mud.

I hope it will not be so with Aunt Charlotte's colonies. Those indeed seem so wisely ordered that they will support themselves. But it is the great schemes of general reform that I doubt.

Comtesse Larderel called the other day and asked much about you. For a moment I could not recollect which of *mes cousines*

she meant—Lou Canning, you, Catherine Phillimore, or Margaret Beaumont or Alberta Ellis—as all my guests are equally called my cousines, and I have taken all up to Pozzolatico ; but when she explained, “ Cette demoiselle si sympathique,” who she had met with me as we returned from calling on her in vain, I knew it could only be you ! Catherine’s book* has made a great success. I am disseminating it as *étrennes* amongst my friends who were civil to her, and it is most favourably received.

Lady Lamington announced Lady Grosvenor’s marriage the other day to Percy Wyndham’s eldest son, commenting on the disparity of ages. I thought it was your Percy Wyndham, and expressed due surprise, very naturally. However, I still think it an experiment.

I recommended a charming book, as I thought, to Aunt Charlotte, the other day, “ Mémoires d’une grande Dame du XVIII^{me} Siècle,” Princesse Helene de Ligne. I had only read her account of her education in the Convent of l’Abbaye aux Bois, and it ends with intrigues, divorce, etc. I shall have to

* “ Studies in Italian Literature,” by Miss Phillimore.

write and withdraw my recommendation, only, if you don't mind such things, it is very interesting up to the last 100 pages.

PALAZZO TOLOMEI,
VIA DEI SERRAGLI 17,
Tuesday, 1887.

I must write a few lines to thank you very much for your dear letter. I ought to have written before, but we have been in such a state of expectation for the last month, and then, when the news came, it was such a disappointment and a disgust that I hadn't the heart to write at first to anyone but Aunt Charlotte. It has been a disappointment, and I think I may justly say so. I had in my favour the opinions of the celebrated Windscheid, the "Principe dei Pandeltiste" in Germany; Alebrandi Koeppen, Hoffman, Ruggieri, Cogliolo, Fadda, the Procuratore-Generale Aurato—five of the judges of the Court of Cassazione at Rome—in fact, all the best authorities on Roman *diritto*, both in Germany and Italy; and, as Serafini of Pisa writes to me, I may comfort myself with the reflection of the great number of learned and competent men who deplore and are scandalized: "Dello

strazio che la Corte de Cassazione fece del diritto romano e dei supremi principi del diritto e dell' equita." He says mine was a *causa giusta e santa*, and he never worked half so earnestly on any in his life. It is a comfort to have the sympathy of so many, and such competent people to give a valuable opinion, who all say I was right and had rights, and it is not the first time that the Roman tribunals have declared the earth does not move—"Eppur se muove," as Galileo says.

I don't know what we shall do now. Corsi says we must not be in a hurry, but must be quite calm. I believe there are going to be some very strong articles written in the legal papers about this open scandal. I cannot write more to-day.

We are rather occupied by these fêtes. I am, principally, about having to go to the Queen, which is a great *pensiero* for me. I expect to have a private audience, if possible, but I have had to get a low dress, which I haven't done for twenty years at least, to be ready in case I have to go in the evening, and it does feel like going into a shower-bath.

We shan't bother about the rest. The Corteo passes before our windows, and I have

invited about forty persons to look out of them. I think we shall go to Casa Torrigiani to see the young people's dresses before they go to the ball, which we certainly shan't, and I think we shall drive on the Colli in the evening to see the illuminations from above and listen to the nightingales and look at the fire-flies. I don't think we shall trouble about much else.

We have actually been to Monte Senario to-day for the first time, and I am tolerably sleepy. Do you remember our starting that unlucky day for it, and our expedition so nearly costing Cesarino his life?

To-day was lovely, and so different, and it was divine. I couldn't have imagined anything so beautiful. We wandered about in the woods carpeted with the loveliest flowers, and, oh! the roses all the way along the road. Nora Trevelyan was perfectly enchanted with the expedition—the best she has ever made yet. We started about half-past ten, and came back at half-past six. They lunched in the wood, and I sketched. Sir Thomas Dick Lauder went with us, and drove Scirocco and Libeccio under Cesare's superintendence.

PALAZZO TOLOMEI,
1887.

I was very glad indeed to hear about Aunt Charlotte, though I do not feel happy at the account you give of her. I hope, as you say, that her low spirits may be the result of the packing and putting by previous to the London move, as well as the weather and the neuralgic headache.

I am sure there has been something in the air this spring, for I have felt just like a rag, and though we had snow on the surrounding hills on Monday, somehow the cold don't seem to brace me up. I should think it must be worse a great deal in England, and then, as you say, there have been worries and anxieties one after the other.

I feel so sorry that mine has been an additional one to her; one would have made any sacrifice rather. She has been so very kind about it, and full of sympathy. But we did have the very best opinions in favour of going on, not only those of the best Italian jurists, but also those of Germany and France. Serafini quoted about twelve living ones, besides all the dead authorities, in my favour. My *avvocati* are wild to go on, even at their

own expense. Corsi says his faith in all justice is shaken, and if we have to go back again to the same Court of Cassazione, with the President a bosom friend of Mancini's, what hope can we have of justice and impartiality.

The sentence is so full of contradictions, and so based on *equivoci*, that Serafini and my other *difensori* say it cannot reasonably stand; it is a disgrace to the Italian Magistratura.

Corsi is going to Rome, where he will see Auriti, the Procuratore-Generale of Cassazione, who is all on my side, and will take counsel with him about what had better be done. We have three months to take it into consideration.

And, in the meantime, I believe that very strong articles are in preparation for the leading legal papers—the *Archivio Giuridico*, the *Foro Abruzzese* (which is quite an independent paper, and has nothing to do with us), and several others. Not that I suppose it will matter very much to us.

I should not mind the decision of the Court in the least if we could imagine it was a just or fair one. It is not the stake one cares for, but the way it has been won, and one grudges the adversaries their triumph.

Nora Trevelyan thoroughly enjoyed her stay here. She was indefatigable at sight-seeing, morning, noon, and night. I confess I was astonished at her, but it seemed to do her good.

I believe that with some persons after a great sorrow it is necessary to be in constant physical motion to avoid being crushed morally. And she certainly bears up most bravely, without a lament, without a complaint, as to her altered condition. She left me to go to Perugia, Siena, Assisi, and either San Gimignano or Monte Uliveto, quite alone with her maid, and after that intended to go to Heathcote Long. I cannot say that I felt the least inclined to emulate her energy.

I think I shall most likely go to Rome to look after my nieces and my poor families, and possibly, if I could combine to do it at the same time that Corsi has to go, we might settle something with the Procuratore - Generale's advice.

I intend to be guided entirely by Corsi in everything, and am sure I could not be in better or more loyal hands, only, as he says, it is better not to make any decision in a hurry.

For the future I have absolutely no plans. I told Nora that if Aunt Charlotte wished me to come to her nothing would stand for a moment in the way of my going. Or, if my mother's health was such that I might be called, I should equally be ready to go. Otherwise I shall have plenty to do both here and at Rome. I should like to go to Rome at the end of June or in July.

We have done some more expeditions which were new to me, and I feel that soon I shall be a complete guide to the Contorni of Florence. The vines are beginning to flower, the woods are full of broom in full blossom, and such wild flowers.

Mrs. Walpole* died at the Grande Bretagne last Saturday. The Murrays were very devoted to her, and looked after her. It is curious she had had the great satisfaction of having finished her church, and then came here to die alone at an hotel.

* Hon. Mrs. Henry Walpole, whose husband had been chiefly instrumental in getting an English church built at Rome.

PALAZZO TOLOMEI,
VIA DEI SERRAGLI 17,
September 22, 1887.

Your two dear letters were most welcome to me, as everything both from Ossington and about yourself always must be, especially now, and both your letters and Catherine's have been most comforting to me. One is apt to imagine so many things at a distance, and I could not help being very anxious from the time I got the Cat's letter on my return from Casciana till I received Catherine's first. When I knew you were at Ossington it was an immense relief to my mind, and I could take rest from suppositions, knowing that you would tell me if there was cause for anxiety about her.

I was sure you would feel your uncle's* loss more than almost anyone. I cannot imagine Chesham Place without him, and he must have been such a moral support on many occasions. And I cannot help thinking that you must have been the one of the family he cared for most, and had most sympathy with in many ways, and for many reasons. I think your Uncle Alfred had a very kindly heart,

* Alfred Denison.

and great affection, and he will be a great loss. Very great to Aunt Charlotte also, for there will be none to take his place, and though she is so capable of doing for herself, still there is great comfort in the feeling that if one ever wants a man's advice or help, there is one we have a right to call on.

Worst of all, both for you and her, will be the associations. I find that one clings so to those who have taken a part in one's past life. Aunt Charlotte would never speak about what she cares most for, but still I think she feels more than she would ever say—the snapping of each link with the past, of each bond of affection for those we have loved whose memories are dear to each of us. . . .

Our weather is divine here—such lovely clear blue skies, and, at last, it has grown rather cooler. I expect the vintage will begin directly, but the roads are so deep in dust that one cannot drive pleasantly in the country.

People are beginning to drop in from their summer outings, and if only we could have a little rain to lay the dust, it would be delicious driving.

I went the other day to pay Luisa, our old *donna*, a visit at Bagni di Ripoli, which was a

great *festa* for all the family. Her son has had two prizes for his pottery, and I promised to have his diplomas framed. As it has been poor old Luisa who paid out of her savings for the whole *fabbrica*, she did the honours of the place as if she was indeed the proprietress, and it was a pleasure to see how bright and radiant she seemed to be.

Mr. Wells has come back. He was at the baths at Casciana just before we were, and, I am happy to say, described their producing exactly the same effects on him as they did on my Contessa. As he looks the picture of health now, I hope they may do her as much good. The Hamilton Ramsays have come back to their villa beyond Bellosguardo, and so have the Spencer Stanhopes.

I saw such a lovely old villa close to Lady Hobart's—the Villa Castellani—with an inside *cortile* and Banksia roses hanging like a veil over the arcades, and a terrace and vaulted rooms, and such a view. It is to be sold. The Canonico to whom it belongs asks 100,000 francs for it, but would take 80,000.

Formerly it might have tempted me, but the tax-gatherers are persecuting me now to pay $13\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on what I ought to have

from Casa Caetani, besides *tassa di famiglia* on my English rents. It is in vain ; I say I have nothing from Casa Caetani yet. They say you ought to have, therefore pay ; and then you can get it back again if it is too much. Corsi has made another *ricorso*, which will keep the matter in abeyance for another year. But if they try to make me pay £300 or £400 a year income-tax as well as what Onorato will have paid, and will deduct, of course, from whatever is due to me, it would be quite a reason for removing out of their reach.

There are general complaints this year from everybody about the extortions of the tax-gatherers.

They have to make up for the enormous extra demands for the African expedition, for the 90,000,000 francs voted for the unnecessary railway from Rome to Naples, which will save an hour, I believe, and now the cholera in Sicily will require fresh subsidies ; 80,000,000 francs were voted for Naples, and have disappeared before any works have been begun. The tax on flour has been taken off, and the deficit has to be filled up by new taxes and new exactions.

In fact, Italian finance is a regular vortex, and I begin to be too thankful that I am not the possessor of one of the many villas I used to wish for, as then I should be liable to be pounced on and sequestered at any moment.

So far, I shall have time to think over what had better be done, and I have arranged with the Maestro di casa that if we cannot settle things satisfactorily, I shall just shut up the house, make a sale of the superfluous objects which my great room is admirably adapted for, and then remove everything valuable to a magazine, while we put an *affitasi* on the apartment till I decide what to do. We hope, however, that it will not come to this. Everyone says it is an iniquity, but I have lost all faith in Italian justice, and I cannot invoke the protection of being a British subject unless I can take some step to reassert my English nationality.

It is rather a bore, just after I had settled here; however, it may all settle itself satisfactorily, and the practical result is that I do not engage in any fresh expenses, and I have all my precautions taken not to be pounced upon unawares.

I should be very sorry to leave Florence for

many reasons, but just now Italy and the rest of the world in general seem to me to be rather in a bad way, and likely to go on from bad to worse. If wars and troubles break out in the rest of Europe, Italy will be sure to be dragged into them, and probably the first thing that will happen will be a national bankruptcy; when there was the war scare, the funds and all stocks went down in a week, and they have not recovered yet. What would happen if war became a reality?

PALAZZO TOLOMEI,

VIA DEI SERRAGLI,

October 15, 1887.

My thoughts are constantly at Ossington, thinking of you and Aunt Charlotte—I won't say without a little envy—that you should be so near and able to be a comfort and an assistance to her, whilst I, who owe more to her than to anyone in the world for the great affection and sympathy she has shown me in all that most interested me in happiness, in sorrow, and in troubles, should be far away; and though I suppose now that I am more free than any of you, and have no ties to keep me from her, am the one who is of no use or

comfort or help to her ! I have begun a new work to distract my thoughts a little, and, as usual, whenever I begin a new work, the curiosity as to the result engrosses me for the moment, and time goes by without my being aware of it. As I try to find out the old lost design and revive the faded colours, so I thought letters to you over and over again, and when the darkness came I got up, feeling stiff from my work, and too lazy to get out of my comfortable armchair to sit down to write.

On Monday I expect my new maid, Celide Franchini. I am sure I don't know if she will suit in the end, but she is most sympathetic, and my heart goes out to her. It is such a thing to have a sympathetic maid about one, and this one has all the charm of the Italian manner—such a pleasant quiet voice, and pretty Italian, and she looks a thoroughly respectable lady's-maid. She also looks tidy, which Adelaide never did, and I feel it will be such a comfort to have one who knows her work, instead of the makeshifts I have had for the last twelve years.

And such a luxury to have one's hair done really, and one's clothes put on, and not

tossed on and off! This one has been six years with Mrs. Macquay and her daughter, Mrs. George Villiers, and as they dressed five or six times a day, I presume she will know how to put on most clothes. She seems to be everything I can wish.

And though parting with Adelaide is breaking another link with the past, still the domestic warfare that has been going on between her and Palmiro for the last year has been growing worse, and things could not have gone on much longer as they were. Besides, it was demoralizing Adelaide, who grew quite vicious whenever she spoke of Palmiro, openly declaring that she considered him as "*proprio il diavolo*," and objecting to everything he did.

Now she is going away content. I have ransacked all my wardrobes, and given her a fine assortment of all sorts of accumulations, and as she is going to her sister, a dress-maker, who lets her have an empty room, I gave her also the furniture for it. I have more than I want, and am delighted to see some disappear.

So Adelaide departs in peace at last, and though I cannot part with one who has been

so long with me without a pang, still I do think it will be a comfort to have a comfortable maid, and not have to give up one thing after another because it was easier to do without than to teach her to do.

I am still rejoicing in my big room, where I make a fine untidy litter, which gives it a perfectly habitable look, and everyone who has been here admires it amazingly. But very soon I shall have to move into the sunny south library, as the summer heat will gradually vanish out of the large room.

My letter was interrupted by a visit from that nice Princess Belmonte, and I put it aside till to-day, and to-day the hills are covered with snow, and I shall have my Eureka cheerful stove lighted and brought into my big room.

I can imagine your not caring much for Mrs. Ross's book. But to anyone who has been at the places it is excellent as a reminder or as a guide. For instance, at Casciana I had jotted down some notes of the places she mentioned, and found them most useful. I have been reading Lord Iddesleigh's lectures and essays; some of them I like very much, especially the one on "Desultory Reading,"

though I had seen most of it in the newspapers. The rest seem to me rather superficial, only it is so difficult to find anything that one has not seen or read or heard in some form before, even though it may be only when one sees it in print that one recognizes an old forgotten friend.

PALAZZO TOLOMEI,

VIA DEI SERRAGLI 17,

October 25, 1887.

We have had some lovely days, and on Tuesday I went to the great horse and cattle fair at the Impruneta. It was a divine day, soft and balmy, with a heavenly sky, all the distant mountains covered with snow, but the trees barely turning to their autumn tints, and the olives covered still with their garlands of vines. The crowd at the Impruneta was dense, very like Callot's engravings of "The Fair" in his time; but the thing which made most impression on us was the number of chickens we saw roasting. All along the walls of the church and convent in that street which leads to the second piazza outside the town there were improvised kitchens—long spits, three at a time, revolving over charcoal

fires and ashes, with dozens of wretched yellow chickens, looking like gigantic frogs, spitted upon them. There were hundreds of these kitchens, and thousands of these chickens! Everybody seemed to buy one wrapped up in yellow paper, and the whole place was strewn with chicken bones.

We went up the hill behind the Impruneta, and from the Campo Santo there was a lovely view. I hadn't my sketch-book with me, which was a pity, as I think I could have made a good drawing of it. I thought of yours, which you did when you were at Rusciano, and wished you had been with us.

Yesterday I went to Quinto to see the Torrigianis, and I heard a piece of news which I was very sorry for—the very sudden death of the Marchese Alessandro Paolucci, brother to the old Marchesa Elisabetta and the Marchesa Covoni. He had been complaining for some time of his heart, and said: “You do not believe it, but I feel ill.”

The other evening he was staying in the country with the Covonis, and he got up to fetch a pack of cards from the next room. When he sat down he was seen to lean gradually to one side, and fell on the floor.

There was no time to raise him ; they put cushions under his head, and in a few minutes all was over.

I am afraid that it will be a great shock to the Marchesa Elisabetta Torrigiani, my particular friend. The last time I saw her, just before they went to Spicciano, their place near Siena, she had just seen this brother who came for a few hours to see her before going to the Covonis, and she said what a pleasure this visit would be to all, and “*che feste gli faranno i Covoni si figuri !*” I think this was early in October.

The Torrigianis are my greatest friends here, and so naturally I feel for them very much. . . .

How much I have been writing about myself ! But my thoughts are so constantly at Ossington, and with you all, that I have been writing about here and about myself as if it was something new. I hope the African Colony* has been doing well. I suppose Aunt Charlotte will hardly have had time to hear from Arnold White since he went out. So many, many thanks for your letter. You

* A settlement started in South Africa by Lady Ossington under the direction of Mr. Arnold White.

can't think what a comfort it has been to hear from you, and how reassured I feel, knowing that you will tell me if there was anything you thought I ought to be told. It makes all the difference in my peace of mind.

PALAZZO TOLOMEI,
VIA DEI SERRAGLI 17,
October 31, 1887.

I have been rather troubled just now by a letter from Corsi. He writes to ask me if Giordani is to engage Villa. I thought it had all been settled when he and Giordani dined with me that we were to have Villa instead of Cogliolo and Regnoli, and I had not seen him since. They told stories, and were very cheerful and agreeable, and I thought everything had been going on as it ought since, as I heard nothing for more than a month, and now it appears that nothing has been done. Cogliolo writes to propose writing something, and Giordani wishes to know what is to be done about him and Villa. Corsi writes to me that he had first been away, and then had had a cough, and asks me what is to be done.

I said it was for him to advise me ; that, of course, I knew nothing of all these people

except what he had told me, and he must judge what their respective merits and influences were likely to be. I said if we lost this time with five *avvocati* the defeat would be greater for us, and the triumph of the adversaries more complete, to say nothing of the expense. And if we won and had to go to Ancona, then they would naturally expect, all of them, to be engaged again—Cogliolo of Modena, Regnoli of Bologna, Villa of Turin, Giordano of Rome, besides Corsi of Florence—and we should be obliged to have someone at Ancona as well, and there would be no end to it.

I think Corsi has been rather going to sleep over the affair lately. He says himself he is feeling that he is getting old, and not able to make great exertions, but I wish he would get one good substitute instead of a lot of second-rate lawyers, who may be very good in their way, but have no weight, and are collected from all sorts of out-of-the-way places, whilst Onorato's are all the first and the most unscrupulous in Rome.

However, I hope it will all settle itself properly, and I mean to make a great stand against unknown and useless expenses. I have

been writing a set of lamentations, but I hope you will forgive me. It is a great relief to be able sometimes to give a vent to one's troubles. Sometimes life seems all placid and serene, and at other times a stormy cloud darkens everything, and a cold wind ruffles all one's hopes and plans.

Florence this year is to be very animated. The King and Queen of Würtemberg have taken the villa of Quarto ; the Queen of Servia another villa ; the Duke and Duchess of Leinster, I am told, are coming ; and Margaret Beaumont has asked me to be civil to the Poltimores.

Sir Thomas Dick Lauder is ill in London from the effects of vaccination. There is so much smallpox in Florence, and a servant's child had died in the house of it, so he thought it prudent to take the precaution. The remedy seems worse than the evil.

PALAZZO TOLOMEI,
November 29, 1887.

My affairs seem to have sorted themselves a little, and Corsi "si e fatto vivo da capo."

Villa has accepted my *causa* with enthusiasm. He is Vice-President of the Chamber of

Deputies, and, therefore, a man who carries some weight, and a great friend of the Government. I see he has been defending a woman who killed her husband with a blow from a broomstick, and he is going to defend a certain Rosa who carried on a disreputable traffic in decorations *à la Limousin*.

I don't feel so pleased at being associated with such clients, but I should think it must be a relief to him to have anyone so respectable as me to defend.

Ceneri, one of Onorato's *difensori*, has been defending another murderer, so it is a nice set we have got among. After all his abuse of me, I hear he now openly admits that we were entirely in the right! Cogliolo, one of my former *difensori*, has been dispensed with very cleverly by Corsi, who, I think, does not intend to speak himself. He will leave to Villa the care of answering Mancini, and the question is to be confined entirely to the matter of form. January 5 has been named for it to come on, but though I dare say it will be put off, I think Miraglia will not dare to trifle with Villa as he did with us before.

I have just got the Duc de Broglie's

memoirs in French, and Ristori's and De Rossi's in Italian. I think they may be curious in some respects. Minghetti's autobiography is to be published speedily, and I dare say that will be interesting enough.

I have been very much at home lately, and seen few people. I don't feel much energy about putting on a bonnet and going to people's days. The Torrigianis are just come back to Florence, but they are in deep mourning still for the Marchesa Elisabetta's brother, and I have not seen her yet. How many sudden deaths there seem to have been lately!

PALAZZO TOLOMEI,
VIA DEI SERRAGLI,
January 6, 1888.

I have just sent you off a Ricordo di Firenze as a *beffana*, not because it is the best or prettiest view, but because it gives you an idea of my situation. The Ponte alla Carraja leads to the Via dei Serragli, and the Palazzo Tolomei is about twice as far down the street as Mozzi was from the Ponte alle Grazie. The tower of Santo Spirito is just behind us, a little to our left, and forms a fine object from my back rooms.

I do quite understand all the difficulties about your coming to me, and I quite appreciate them. About my own coming over to England, I think I should like, if possible, to stay on till April or May, unless Aunt Charlotte expressed a wish for me, and then I would come at once.

But my *causa* may be decided one way or another in February or March, and perhaps I might have to go to Rome, or settle things after the decision.

Once business arranged or set in motion, I should like then to start, and stay on in England as long as I can, and, if possible, select the much-thought-about *pied-à-terre* in England.

We have had terrible weather, snow lying on the roofs for days, and the streets at first quite impassable. I went up to Lady Hobart on Tuesday; it was the first time the road was carriageable. They had been snowed up, and had to depend for supplies of all sorts on what could be brought by hand—ought I not rather to say by foot?

People talk a great deal about the Queen of England's visit in February or March. It is a profound secret, so, of course, we know all

about it. M. Kanne, the director of the Queen's travels, has been several times to the Villa Palmieri to make arrangements. Lady Crawford goes to Venice, I hear, with her whole household, leaving one servant only. Four small villas have been engaged for the Queen's suite. Palmiro, my *maggiordomo*, says the villa is not at all in a fit state to receive the Queen.

Gladstone is here, and has an extinction of voice. People say it is a pity he hadn't it sooner. He created quite a sensation in poor old Tottenham's church. Italians came in to have a good look at him, and Mr. Tottenham was frightened to death lest he should propose to read the lessons.

The Queen of Servia lives very quietly at her Villa Ilzinger on the Via Bolognese. She is in deep mourning for her grandmother. She gave one dinner to the authorities civil and military, the feature of which was that she walked in alone to dinner first, then the ladies followed in single file, then the men. Each lady, however, had a cavalier next her.

She created a great sensation at first, walking about the streets with her hair all down her back, accompanied by her carriage with

startling liveries. She used to be quite mobbed. Now she has done up her hair, and walks without her carriage at her heels, so no one looks at her.

PALAZZO TOLOMEI, 1888.

I wish the accounts you give of Aunt Charlotte could have been better, but, after all, it has been such an exceptionally trying winter that one must not wonder that she too has felt the effects of it. Here everybody has been more or less ill. I have been almost constantly shut up for the last six weeks. Connie Murray has been very ill indeed with congestion of the lungs. Marcia Bampfylde was shut up since Christmas, and her mother at last took her away in despair. Stufa, who dined yesterday with me, could hardly speak, and all Castagnolo is in a deplorable state, and many others. So I wonder Aunt Charlotte has been able herself to resist as well as she has done. . . .

In the meantime, the English Queen arrived to-day, and, curiously enough, though the weather has been infamous for I don't remember how long, it actually cleared up, and

the sun came out about half an hour before she was due. And Florence looked very bright and gay in the sunshine, with flags out all down the streets where she was to pass, and crowds of people lining the streets to see her. She looked uncommonly well and pleased, in an open carriage with Princess Beatrice and Prince Battenberg, followed by an escort of mounted police, the rest of her suite nowhere.

I hear Lady Crawford is nearly dead with the fatigue of having had to make all the preparations. Seventy-eight beds were required, and all the arrangements existing in the house changed. The Queen herself wrote to say that she only wished for a comfortable arm-chair, and begged nothing might be altered; but the household were not so easily contented, and everything had to be turned upside down—bedrooms converted into sitting-rooms, sitting-rooms into bedrooms. Every manservant required a separate bedroom, and every lady a bedroom arranged as a sitting-room as well. New sanitary arrangements and fireplaces in all the north rooms.

They say our Queen Margherita is coming to meet Queen Victoria the week after Easter. The Emperor and Empress of Brazil are also

coming on April 4, so Florence will probably look very bright and animated.

Sir John Savile Lumley is here. He came to see me directly after he arrived, and I asked him to dine with me, as I had a little party the next day. It did very well, and then we went to Casa Torrigiani, and if he is not engaged I am to take him to Casa Corsini on Monday. He made himself very pleasant. I had asked him if he would have liked to have accepted the hospitality that Palazzo Tolomei could offer, but he had to bring a secretary and a military attaché and suite, and so thought the Arno would be more convenient. He was, however, greatly struck with the beauty of my apartment.

I have written a long letter, and, I think, a very stupid one. It must be the effect of a concert I went to at Princess Rospigliosi's. It was an awful night, and I had a terrible cold, so I escaped after the first act with the excuse that if I began to sneeze and cough I should disturb the music. It really was beautiful, and very soft, but I thought it long.

Eolo and Borea, my two new horses, are doing very well, only they are getting very fresh, and Eolo did nothing but hop about

yesterday. Their tails are progressing, but still very short. You can't think how backward we are; the trees are only in bud, and the anemones have only lately appeared.

PALAZZO TOLOMEI,
VIA DEI SERRAGLI,
Thursday, March 29, 1888.

The doctor has just been, and says Franchini has the fever slightly, and with her constitution she could not safely travel to-day, and perhaps not to-morrow. If I could put off my journey till Monday I should be very glad, for it would be a terrible business if she fell ill on the road, and Aristea is such a Newfoundland puppy that she would be very little use or comfort to me. But I could do it, of course, if either your letters or telegrams made it desirable, and would without the slightest hesitation.

Somehow it seems so impossible to realize that, after having been ready for months to start—at the slightest word, as I thought—when the moment comes, like a bolt from the blue, I should not be ready. Still, your letter of Monday, received to-day, gives me more hope, and makes me feel less anxious. . . .

I feel it is selfish to hesitate a day, but I have so many things to settle, not only about my household, and my poor, and my *causa*, that I should be glad to have the time necessary for Franchini to travel safely, but also I should then be able to make all my arrangements, so as to be able to remain away any time, either one month or one year.

In any way I am going on with my packing and making all my arrangements, but I feel half distracted, and hardly know where to find my papers. And then there seem to be so many things to settle this year about the servants and a hundred other things which I never thought of.

Laurentino wants to marry Adelaide, and I expect that will lead to complications with Palmiro, as they both hate each other. I fancy Palmiro asks nothing better than to get rid of Laurentino. Palmiro is a very good servant, and understands the service better than anyone. All the others want to be *padrones*. I do not want to part with those who have served me faithfully, if not well, and this war between Adelaide and Palmiro has shaken my confidence in both. Both seemed ready to sacrifice me willingly to their hatred

of each other, and I fear the spot of oil has been spreading.

I am sure you will understand how all this complicates matters ; also I must put my papers in order, in case of anything happening to me in my absence. And there is no one to help me in any way—and people calling and sending notes, and wasting my time, and distracting my thoughts. Of course, Aunt Charlotte is the first and greatest preoccupation, and I can hardly realize this anxiety after the better accounts ; but I know there must be cause, or you would not tell me so.

I trust to you. I feel hopeful now, since your last telegram—perhaps too much so, for you know I have not seen her since last August twelvemonth, and very likely I have not realized the full change the illness will have wrought.

But, of course, there is nothing in anything I have named to you that could be any reason for delay if I could be wanted, or that could ever console me for being away if I might have been with her, should the illness become more serious.

So I trust to you, and still hold to my plan, unless anything from you caused me to change

it, to start on Sunday night or Monday at latest, when I hope Franchini will be fit, and get to the Coburg Hotel on Wednesday or Thursday of next week, and there wait to hear what you will suggest.

PALAZZO TOLOMEI,

Monday, April 2, 1888.

Your letter of Good Friday was the most inexpressible relief to me in every way. I have almost everything ready, and could start in twelve hours after getting a telegram from you.

All my things are packed except the last necessities. To-day I shall go to my jeweller and consign all my valuables to his care, and so I feel on velvet after all the hurry and confusion of packing. Franchini is up, and has been packing, but has not yet been able to go out, so I shall be truly glad to have two or three days more here before leaving. There is so much to do in a house like this, and if I can superintend it, it will make all the difference to me about coming away in peace, and not being obliged to return at any fixed date. I would, after your letter, think of starting Thursday, and I dare say I could combine to go to the

Cat first. I should probably be at the Coburg in the first days of next week. I would, if I can, rather give Franchini time to be quite strong, and then make a rush to Paris by the shortest route, sleep one night on the road, and be in London ready to come when wanted, without alarming Aunt Charlotte, than have to rush off, leaving everything half done here, and risking knocking up the maid just to remain at an hotel doing nothing, when I have so much to do here. But now I am in marching order, and at a word from you can start. It has been such a hurry and confusion, thanks to Franchini's most unfortunate illness. Imagine, when I began to pack myself when Franchini took to her bed, I found my dress-basket full of hay! I suppose it must have been what my Eureka cheerful stoves were packed in two years ago. I then remarked casually that perhaps my horses would like to taste English hay, and it was evidently preserved in my best dress-basket ever since.

I have been more thankful than I can say to feel that between you and Catherine I was likely to know sufficient to prevent my imagining what was not true, and I trust implicitly to you. I know you will say come

if I ought to come, and I quite understand that I ought not to startle or alarm Aunt Charlotte or propose coming down to Ossington at once. . . .

Yesterday (after your telegram of the day before had relieved my mind) I thought I might take a little drive to rest. I had been packing and putting away all Saturday, till I was nearly dead. So, as Mrs. Peploe called on me just as the carriage came round, I proposed I should take her to Fiesole and Vincigliata.

As we passed the Villa Spence, the *cancello* being open, she expressed a wish to see it, and I asked if we might. I was told yes, and that the family were all down in Florence.

We had scarcely entered when we met Spence father and Spence son walking towards the *cancello*. On seeing my victoria, they asked who I was, and returned to do the honours of the villa to us. We hadn't been there twenty minutes when a gardener came rushing in: "Ecco la Regina d' Inghilterra." Accordingly, in she drove with her outrider and suite in a second carriage. Mrs. Peploe and I stood in the loggia and made our rever-

ences ; then, after the Spences had explained the view, she got out and came into the villa. I said to Mrs. Peploe : “ Now is our time ; let us go. She don’t like strangers.” We got into the victoria, which was waiting at the terrace, and were quietly driving away, when there was a calling and running after us, and the gardener and one of the Spence sons overtook us, and said the Queen had asked who we were, and said she knew me, and wished to speak to me if I was not gone. So we returned, and General Ponsonby called Lady Churchill, and Lady Churchill took me in and named me to the Queen, who was very gracious to me, and presented me to “ my daughter Beatrice,” and then Mrs. Peploe was also presented.

We were highly pleased at our *accueil*, especially as the Queen is said specially to avoid strangers. Raffaello Torrigiani told me that Pietro Torrigiani’s children, who are with him at the Villa Boutourline, just above the Palmieri, whenever they see the Queen driving about in the grounds, rush to the *inferriata* which separates them with all their parrots, dogs, and other pets, having heard the Queen is fond of animals, in the

hope of attracting her attention and getting her to stop and speak to them. Rather like throwing bones to the British lion.

My Queen Margherita arrives to-morrow. I think I shall go the station to salute her, and to-day try to take leave of the Queen of Servia.

PALAZZO TOLOMEI,
VIA DEI SERRAGLI,
Thursday, 1889.

You must forgive me if I have not written sooner. I have been constantly thinking of you, and Ossington is mixed up with everything, but I have not had a moment to myself. The sort of way in which I have been received by all sorts of people is wonderful. The surprise, the rejoicings at the top of everybody's voice, the embracings, the letters I have been having, are overwhelming after being in silent England for so long. It is, you see, just the Pasqua when everyone visits and rejoices, and that also adds to the general effect. Even the servants of my friends beam on me and exclaim: "O! Signora Duchessa! ben tornata! Lei sta bene? mi rallegro tanto!" It sounds so funny after England.

I was so glad to get your letter with the better account of Aunt Charlotte. After Alice's good reports, with which I went on my way rejoicing and peacefully, your Good Friday's letter was very down-heartening, and I felt as if last year was going to reproduce itself day by day almost. Now, again, I feel happier. . . .

Now I must tell you a few other things, which I dare say you will like to tell her about too. Mr. Scott is very ill, I am afraid; he looks ashen, and seems to have lost all energy. They have got young Lady Dysart staying with them. Lou Scott told me the marriage has turned out most unhappily. . . . Her health has suffered terribly, and she looks like a corpse, so she is come to stay with her aunt. The last time I saw her it was at that great party in honour of their wedding which was given at Ham. She was then looking so bright and happy and nice, and now such a wreck!

Jack Monson comes back to me to-morrow from Venice, and then I shall have to give a dinner or two to my friends to test Tonino's improvement. He comes to me with such a list of dishes which he proposes to make for

me, that I feel as if I should die of repletion at the thoughts of them.

I have been hard at work calling on my most intimate friends, and on Monday I took the Torrigiani bride her *cadeau*—one of my old cabinets with which she was delighted. I there heard that Brie Corsini is to marry Count Pandolfini, and half a dozen other marriages which give general satisfaction.

There is a Lady Hay with two daughters in the Vernon's apartment in Palazzo Canegiani. What curious people the English are! They sent out cards promiscuously for a party, heading it "Time and Talent." They asked all sorts of people they did not know. It was generally supposed that meant charades or amateur theatricals, especially as the Vernons constantly had conjuring parties at that house. It turned out to be a prayer-meeting. They had asked Catholics and all sorts of people, and about eighty had come. At the next party about five came, so I was told.

The Rosses' new villa promises to be delightful. Poor Stufa's family behaved abominably to him, and grudged him everything during the last moments of his illness. The Rosses had to turn out at once. Now Mino,

the nephew, has installed himself at Castagnolo. They have stripped the house of its roses and honeysuckles which quite covered the garden front, because they are unprofitable, and intend to plant peach-trees and vines instead. They have turned the lawn into a cabbage-garden, and are looking out for an English family to whom they can let it for 5,000 francs a year! reserving an apartment for Mino to live in, and only occasionally permitting the English family, as a great favour, to walk in the cabbage garden. I did not know that Mino had so much imagination. I feel as if I had so much to tell you, but I must end now.

PALAZZO TOLOMEI,
VIA DEI SERRAGLI 17,
July 25, 1889,

I shall be very sorry to miss you in London, but I hope we may meet when you come back. I am thinking of leaving this about August 7, and stopping some days in the Tyrol on my way back. I hope to send off my luggage, including various objects, for Green Street the first days of next week, and then shall endeavour to make up my mind to follow them at leisure. It is delicious here with all

my comforts about me. I sit in the ex-American church, which is just large enough for me to breathe up the air in comfort. I have a lovely old piece of embroidery to restore, and the hours slip away without my perceiving them. I have heaps of interests and occupations, and a good many friends still here. . . .

Still, I think it would be desirable that one of us should be at hand in case Aunt Charlotte should wish for it, and with Green Street as a *pied-à-terre* I shall be able to run up and down *a piacere*. Green Street is rather a hutch when compared to this, and it is certainly a pleasure to walk through five halls to my dining-room in the evening. I must say I shall be sorry to leave it. I have still a good many friends left. Casa Torrigiani is my usual resort in the evenings, and, besides, I have the Rosses at Poggio Gherardo, which is delicious; the Hamilton Ramsays at the Villa dell' Orto; and the Gaston de Larderels at the Casino Borghese. My Contessa came up and stayed three days with me, and I accompanied her back to the Selve. Now she is gone to the Pieve to visit the Bonettis.

Carlo Orsi is doing an interior of S. Miniato

for me, which is a great interest. Salvatore is restoring three *arazzi* for me, and I constantly go and look at the work to encourage the *lavoranti*. I have a lovely old border which I am restoring myself, and I get so interested over it, that I could work at it for ten hours at a time.

I must say I shall be very sorry to give up Florence, but, at the same time, once in England, I feel that quantities of interests will spring up about me, and I must say it took a good deal to decide me to leave Green Street to come here.

I hope your expedition to Bayreuth will be even more successful than that of last year, and that you will thoroughly enjoy your visit to Prague. I should think it would be a novel experience to you—a new horizon.

Before I end, I must just say that one of the chief things that I am waiting here for is the legal copy of the *Instrumento*. I think it just as well that I should see it before I leave Italy, although no one could do better than Pieretto has done for me. He has been quite admirable in every way, and so business-like.

By-the-by, Edith Peruzzi told me that she

had met Ersilia last year, who said how sorry she was that there had been this family "quarrel." She complained bitterly of her poverty, but said she had accepted Onorato's offers to her in order to avoid *'lite in famiglia !*

The fact was, as I heard in Rome, the question was originally submitted to arbitration without my being told that the decision, being entirely contrary to Onorato, he offered his sister £8,000 compensation for what he said her claims were.

By this means he purchased her silence, knowing, as Corsi told me, that if I had had a child, the question would in all probability have been decided in my favour. Had Ersilia joined with me as the daughter of my husband it would have been the same thing. As it was, they tried to throw all the odium of disputing my husband's succession on me, with the expense of the lawsuit, their great argument being that I had married after the donation, and that I was only a *forestiera*, persuading Ersilia that if I won her claims would be recognized, and if I lost I should have to pay all the expenses, in fact, making a cat's-paw of me.

Now her eyes seem to be opened when it is too late.

As for me, I had much rather that the Caetani children should have the advantage than Ersilia's, but I could not allow myself to be made accessory to a fraud on them, if my husband was right in what he always told me that the cession was only valid during his life. The result of the *causa* has been an augmentation of my income by about 6,000 francs a year on verifying the accounts, and I expect that Ersilia has also been done out of that which would represent an additional 150,000 francs for her. The result of the liquidation, as far as I am concerned, is that with the interest on the arrears I have about £800 a year more than I should have had, and nearly £1,500 a year more than Onorato originally offered me after my husband's death.

I have settled it all on the Serventis instead of Leone as I should have done, and I reserve the interest of the accumulation to pay my husband's charities and help these nieces, who are all poor, during my lifetime.

OSSINGTON,

NEWARK, NOTTS,

August 25, 1889.

I arrived in London on the 20th. I then communicated with Ossington, and came down here on Saturday. But I do not think that it will be for a long visit.

I found Aunt Charlotte very much better than I expected after Alice's reports. I certainly do not think her as well or as strong as she was last year in October, when I came down to see her—hardly, I think, as strong as when I came away in December, but very much better than when I saw her the first days in April. She has grown a year older, and, naturally, less strong, but, I think, not more than one would expect. She seems bright and pleasant and takes an interest in everything, and I think, for the present, all seems to be going on smoothly. . . .

I had a very pleasant visit at Schloss Freudenstein in the Tyrol, and stayed on longer than I intended. There were quantities of walks and drives in the neighbourhood, and an immense number of Schlosses. We had a capital view of the Dolomites from the Schloss itself, and really the Rosengarten

looked too beautiful—purple in the morning, snowy white by day, and rose-coloured in the evening. I made lots of rapid sketches whilst I was there. The Schloss partly dated B.C., but some of the additions were mediæval, and others more modern, which fortunately were those we lived in.

I was staying with the Murrays. When they were leaving Florence they pressed me so much to come and pay them a visit on my way, that I felt it would be ungracious to refuse, especially as my return to Florence is so uncertain now ; and I enjoyed it very much indeed. On Friday I left Botzen and came on to Rheims, where I stayed two days and a night, at a very nice quiet little hotel, the Lion d'Or, close to the Cathedral, which interested me immensely. Then I came on to London, where I arrived on Tuesday morning, and on Saturday here.

I send this to the Post Restante, Reichenhalle, as Mrs. Denison writes that she is expecting you there.

OAKWOOD,

WEST MALVERN,

October 5, 1890.

H. L.* is wonderful, and we have been making expeditions to Worcester, Tewkesbury, and Hereford, to say nothing of nearer places ; she is wonderfully active, and climbs up the hills in a marvellous way.

St. James is progressing ; less fast than it might if the walls weren't occasionally pulled down just as they get to the first floor to be excavated 6 or 8 feet below the level of the soil. But I think it will be very comfortable when finished.

H. L. talks of it eventually being mine, and sometimes consults me about it. I generally decline interfering, as I don't understand building or horizontal designs, but I throw all my weight in favour of preserving trees, and avoiding all unnecessary expenses. There are at present, therefore, to be no hothouses, and wild flowers instead of tame. But there are to be two smoking-rooms and a billiard-room, which certainly in my estimation come under the head of "Le superflu chose si necessaire aux femmes."

* Dowager Lady Howard de Walden.

But we say the house ought to be entirely for her, and as she likes it, and to promote her comfort and health, and it is an enormous interest and occupation to her.

I quite enter into all you say about the past. You exactly express what I feel. We might perhaps have done better if we had taken a more decided line, but I am not quite sure, and I am sure we did what we thought best, and only perhaps in our willingness to sacrifice ourselves for her we sacrificed her. And, I think, she grew too weak at the end to have any decided wish or will.

I cannot take my thoughts away from the past, and I shall always be grateful to you for sending me that telegram on that Sunday, which at least spared me the bitter pang of feeling that she passed away* without one of her own blood near her. Little as that could help her then !

There have been great compensations since, and I have found duties to replace those that were taken from me. It is not the same thing, but, after all, my mother is the only person now left who has a right to express a wish to me, and I think I am able

* Lady Ossington had died September 30, 1889.

to be of use very often in smoothing difficulties. We get on very well now, and I think she feels that I am very disinterested, and only want to show my gratitude to her for what she has done for me, not for the future.

With my own house, I am perfectly independent, and ready to go whenever I am not wanted; and she tells me all about her interests and business, and very often asks my advice and opinion, though I never expect it to be taken, and don't mind if it is not.

I see much more of my own people than I ever did with Aunt Charlotte, and that was the one thing I regretted most, I was so cut off from those of my own blood.

Cat seems to be progressing slowly, but she had a bad attack of heart complaint, just after I left her at Eastbourne, which made us very anxious. She will have to be very careful in future.

THE MOTE PARK,
MAIDSTONE,
March, 1891.

I am afraid there is no chance of my being in town at present. Poor Cat's illness has

made terrible strides. Hallowes told H. L. that we could not at the best hope for any improvement before two months, and that if there was none, then she could not last three.

But the end might come at any moment. In the meantime she keeps up her spirits wonderfully, though she is quite aware of the danger she is in.

The Deane girls are here. They are very nice and cheerful, and ready to do anything. Both Pussy and H. L. say it is such a comfort to have us here. They do not know how they would be able to bear up without it. Talking over one's troubles often helps one to face them.

As for making mysteries about such things, it is absurd, and I almost think wicked. We know what the danger is. It has to be broken gradually and cautiously, and then by degrees one can familiarize oneself with the inevitable. "*Saetta prevista viene piu lenta.*"

But why lower oneself to artifice to disguise and pretend not to know what we know, that they know that we know, and keep up an appearance of hypocrisy? . . .

Now she has taken this sudden turn for

the better, but who can say how long it may last! . . .

Don't sacrifice yourself; but I feel in urging you to come now that it may be your last chance of seeing her as she is, and she does wish you so much to come, and, if you can, not for a hurried visit.

THE MOTE PARK,
MAIDSTONE,
March, 1891.

I am losing no time in writing to you, to tell you that there is a decided amendment in Pussy, though we fear it can be but of a temporary character, and my mother bids me write and ask you whether you can come while it lasts.

On Monday H. L. goes to London and then to Malvern, and will be away a week or ten days if nothing happens to call her back. She thought it would be very nice if you could come whilst I was alone here, and stay on after she came back. Of course, I should be delighted to have the chance of seeing you, and it would be less tiring for Pussy to see you at first when there is one less.

So I am writing at once, for I know it will

take a little while to make your arrangements, and I should be very glad if you could give me an approximate idea before Monday when H. L. leaves. We cannot offer you any attractions. There will be only me here and poor Cat, and later H. L. But there are the garden and the flowers and the drives, and you will be quite quiet.

And I cannot disguise from myself that, humanly speaking, it will be the last time you will have a chance of seeing poor Cat. She is very brave and cheerful, but more quiet and subdued. You are the only person she wishes to see.

THE MOTE PARK,
MAIDSTONE,
March 30, 1891.

I write a few lines to-day in the hopes that you may get them before you leave East Brent.

And I will begin by saying the account of Pussy is much better, and H. L. is much worse. . . .

H. L. has been doctoring herself. She took a row of embrocations and cough mixtures. I saw them all ranged on her table, which have produced the wrong results. She will now

have to take a row of antidotes. In the meantime she has been staying up in her room all day since you left, but comes down to dinner.

To-day she said she coughed perpetually, and feels very weak, but she hopes the present remedies will undo the effects of the cough mixtures. She is trying a new embrocation of eucalyptus oil which is very strong. At least, you smell it from her boudoir to the foot of the backstairs, and all down the corridor. I hope it may do good, but I have not much faith in these arrangements, especially when combined.

THE MOTE PARK,
MAIDSTONE,
April 1, 1891.

This will find you at Bournemouth, I suppose, and probably you will have already seen in the papers that all was over with poor Pussy yesterday. . . .

You cannot think what a blessed expression of peace came over her countenance afterwards, as she lay with her head surrounded with white blossoms. I had taken her her flowers in the morning with the bunch of violets, and she had smiled when she saw them amongst

hers. I put them in her hand at last, and now those violets will always be dear to me more than any other flower, with the recollection of Rome, my Duca, Aunt Charlotte, and poor Pussy.

She looked so young, and there was such a look of rest and calm, after the weary struggle of days and weeks that has been going on. One felt it could only be a merciful deliverance at last from great suffering that was before her.

My mother is bearing up much better than we could have expected. It was a great shock at first, but she had not been near Pussy for ten days for fear of giving her the influenza, so she was spared much. She has been several times to see her now.

22, GROSVENOR PLACE,
June 28, 1891.

I return you the diaries* which I have finished entirely, and I think you will find all the loose letters and papers most carefully put together.

* Diary of John Evelyn Denison, Speaker of the House of Commons, 1857-1874.

I think the journals most interesting; to those who knew him particularly so. They are the memorials of the conscientious care and diligence and uprightness with which he discharged the duties of an important office for many years, in a way in which evidently they had never been done before.

It seems to me that they ought to be most valuable as a record to his successors in office, and of great use as precedents. Whether and how much has been changed since his time, of course I cannot tell, but I see they used to go back a couple of centuries for precedents.

I do not know what Sir Erskine May's work was. He was a great authority about all details of procedure, and I cannot help thinking he wrote some work on the subject. I think besides a constitutional history of England, but I am not sure.

I think the letters about the appointments also most interesting, and it would be well indeed if they could be accepted as precedents on all matters of patronage, as inspired by the single-hearted wish to appoint the right man to the right place so as best to serve the public interest.

We have said much of this already, but I could not help just repeating it in sending back the diaries.

I am so glad they have been handed over to your keeping. None could have been better, and I am most grateful to you for having let me have them to read at such leisure.

22, GROSVENOR PLACE,
July 29, 1891.

This is to wish a *ben tornata* in Inghilterra, and I hope to see you soon. I expect to go to Malvern on Monday next. How nice if you go too!

I had great trouble about getting the "Angel of the Resurrection" from Rome. It hasn't been done, and can't be done from the original, as the chapel is too dark, but Pieretto got me one which Carlo Tenerani had done from the plaster cast himself. Holiday approved of it, and on Wednesday will have a little sketch prepared. He intends it to be quite unlike the original, only carrying out the idea.

He is to have a garden-party to artists on Wednesday, and if we could go down between

four and five would dedicate ten minutes to us and the angel, and perhaps have his drawing ready.

I took Barbara Leighton with me to the studio, and she was much pleased, and would like to go to the artists' party, if fine.

The Speaker, I hear, is very anxious to see Uncle Denison's journals, and thinks they would be very interesting.

I enclose his letter. I saw his daughter, and spoke to her about them. The message was ill delivered, as usual, so I wrote and said you had let me read them, and I had been most interested about them, and had urged you to let him see them if he wished it. But first we must know whether he would care, and also that you had thought of taking the advice of some competent person to be decided on hereafter as to whether they, or parts of them, might be privately printed.

You see, the question will entirely rest with yourself, but I think it will be very interesting to you to discuss the question with him, and I am told he is extremely interested about it. I think it would be quite a thing for you to do, if you have no objection to it, and no one could do it better than yourself, and I think

he would be the most competent from the position to give you an opinion, and I am sure it would be an interest to him.

OAKWOOD.

WEST MALVERN,

August 24, 1891.

I send you on Holiday's drawing for your approbation ; please tell me what you think of it.

My great objection to the two angels above is that they take off from the simplicity and repose of the subject. Holiday has already lost the character of my angel, which was repose waiting quietly for the Day of Judgment for indefinite ages. Holiday's angel looks as if it was expecting it at once, and might lose its patience ; Tenerani's as if it knew it must wait, and had waited centuries in patience and faith and peace.

The weather here is quite deplorable : yesterday constant heavy thunderstorms. However, we went out in the pony carriage over the hill at the back of the reservoirs just after one storm. H. L. walked down the hill to St. Anne's Well, and we stayed about three-quarters of an hour in the donkey-shed during

another. It was too wet for me to be taken to see the improvements (?) at St. James's afterwards. H. L. with glee informed me that all the trees except one yew and one other tree in the new piece were coming down, also all those near the house, and rock-work to be substituted. I feel it so difficult to prevent expressing my opinion when asked, and I cannot honestly admire the work of the arboriclasts.

H. L. said to me the other day she felt scruples about spending her money on her own pleasure in this way. I said, "Why should she, as long as she pleased herself?" She said: "I don't like to think my children will come here after I am gone, and say how foolishly I have spent." I said without thinking: "Oh, but none of your children ever will come here probably!"

I feel so afraid of letting out some of my thoughts, and, after all, what does it matter? The place might have been made charming, and instead it will be a tea-garden. But if it pleases her, *c'est l'essentiel*.

OAKWOOD,

WEST MALVERN,

September 13, 1891.

I know you will like to hear about my visit to Loton,* so I must tell you about it. Really I have nothing to say except in praise of everybody and everything. They are all delightful, and I like them more and more, and she is so connected with so many recollections and associations that it made everything especially interesting to me, and I couldn't have liked anything better.

The great hall was beautiful, and so well arranged. The pictures, both by herself and Barbara, are full of *cachet* and originality, and I have taken immensely to Barbara. We did some photographs. Hers were really artistic; mine left much, if not all, to be desired. All that I can say of them is that the best were suggestive. There must be something wrong about me, or the films, or the camera.

Nelly Leighton showed me a good deal of her work, which is most artistic. There seems a soul in all she does—nothing commonplace, or banal, or meaningless. I delight in the sun-

* Sir Baldwyn Leighton's place.

flowers all over the place, and especially those she embroidered on the curtains. Dear me ! how well they look !

Then there were such heaps of interesting things to hear and see. Oh, my dear, how amused I was about that spotted dog of Bryan's, which Nelly Leighton first paid £2 for to exempt it from being beaten by Bryan ! Then she bought him (all but his tail, which Bryan reserved the privilege of pulling) for £5 more, and then she had to give an oak settle, which they coveted for the tail. It was just like H. L. and Pitt's cottage : First they asked £1,250 for that cottage, then £1,450, then £150 for the ground it stood on, then £2,000 ; and she has gone and bought it out of economy for £1,800, and is going to pull it down.

Another row of arches is to be dug out below the ambulatory, and one floor of the colonnade is to be curtailed.

The cypress hedge and the mulberry-tree are gone. More land has been bought, and more trees are to be cut down.

The grounds will now reach to the road below Pitt's cottage, and a bridge is to be made from those steps below the house across the upper road into the new piece, which joins

on to that small villa just at the turn below the Westminster Arms.

During the excavations it was discovered that the mountain leaks into the stoke-hole. There is a difficulty about treating it, because it does not seem to be a spring, but a general effect of rain on the mountain. If concreted, H. L. says the stoke-hole will probably blow up. It's like being on a latent volcano, but not the first time "*que la Montagne accouche d'une souris.*"

I came here Saturday from Loton. Altogether I was delighted with my visit. H. L. was much pleased with the messages I brought, and hopes to see them in London some day. They sent her his little notice of Theodore Talbot, which pleased her very much, and she says she would like very much to know Sir Baldwyn.

22, GROSVENOR PLACE,
October 14, 1891.

I enclose Holiday's last. I think I have conquered him, and in a way not to affront him, or to disgust him, though I won't say he is converted. He struggled hard for what he called his child-angels, which were to lend

grace and beauty and tenderness to the memorial.*

So I replied that the first thing to be considered was the suitability to the person. Had we chosen St. Michael, he might have had as many angels as he pleased in his border, for St. Michael is associated with all angels.

But on mature consideration, I considered the Angel of the Resurrection the most suited to her—most in keeping with her character.

Strong, upright, good, charitable, conscientious, her whole life was a preparation for that call whenever it should come. The one sorrow of her married life was that she had no children. After she lost her husband she bore her grief alone; her life was from choice a lonely one, and tenderness and softness were not her characteristics.

Therefore the characteristics of the memorial should be grandeur, simplicity, unity, and I cannot consent to decorative child-angels, which seem to me utterly inappropriate.

I hope it will be all settled satisfactorily, and I give up all the minor details to him, and he can send you the coloured sketch when it is done.

* Memorial window to Lady Ossington.

VIA DEI SERRAGLI 17,
March, 1892.

I am delighted to hear the window is in its place, and that Willy Denison and Lady Elinor are pleased with it. That is the great point. I feel sure I should agree with you about not liking the poppies; all along I thought the fault of the border was that it was too overpowering. I objected to the angels because they were unnecessary, and disturbed the balance, and I am sure that I should have preferred a uniform pattern that was unobtrusive.

However, if the rest is good, that is much, and if they are pleased it is more, and if you are content it is most.

I do hope the light from that window will fall on Uncle Denison's memorial. It seems to me as if it would be so appropriate. Her life was so bound up with his; her every effort was to do something that would reflect honour on his name that she bore so well, and now it seems that since their tablets had to be separated, it would be very appropriate if through our window the light should be reflected on the memorial she put up to him, and so in death they still will not be divided, united as they were in life.

VIA DEI SERRAGLI 17,
March 14, 1892.

I got Holiday's letter redirected by you yesterday, and the sketch to-day.

I confess I remained when I saw the long-legged thing! Oh, why did he put the superfluous length into the limbs!

You know I always said I didn't like angels or Scripture subjects as rendered by modern artists, and I don't feel converted at all to this. However, it is not for my church, and I do hope that, as you say, it looks much better up in its place than in his studio, and if Willy Denison and Lady Elinor are pleased it is the essential.

I agree with you about the poppies, but when I look at the legs and arms of the angel, I can't but feel too thankful we were spared eight other ill-drawn little limbs.

After all, I understand now why he didn't send us the coloured sketch before.

But I suppose the same may be said of glass as of marble. The clay model is life, the plaster cast is death, and the marble resurrection, and I am judging from Death. But I confess I had hoped for better things from Holiday after our visit to his studio.

I am very glad we have done it, and, of course, though I could have wished it better, and am disappointed in this sketch, still we did our best. The great thing was that Aunt Charlotte should have a proper memorial, and, after all, your letter gives me great consolation that the window may not be nearly so bad as I think. And we have joined together in a loving work, which I could not have wished to do with anyone but you. . . .

I have been looking again at the sketch. The angel looks as if it was made of gutta-percha with one leg drawn down, whilst the other has flown up with a spring! However, one's photography teaches one that lines vary, from the point of sight of one's camera in every way. How much photography teaches one, especially in architecture, and distance, and perspective, and disappointments.

VIA DEI SERRAGLI 17,
FLORENCE,
February 5, 1892.

I do not like to hear of your feeling so weak after the influenza, and I do hope you will take care of yourself.

Here everybody almost has had it, they

say benignly, because people don't die of it, as they seem to do in England, but whole households take to their beds one after the other.

Everybody is still occupied with the Fenzi bankruptcy case.

It seems it began long ago. The Bank was in temporary difficulties, and Carlo and Emanuele proposed to borrow on the securities deposited with them, always intending to make good what they took when affairs came round. Their *cassiere* helped them, and then profited by their example to do a little business on his own account, and went off with £80,000. I never understood till now why they did not proceed against him. They said it would do the bank so much harm if it was known that they had better bear the loss and say nothing. Now I see that he would have shown up their irregular proceedings.

When Camillo Fenzi's sister left her husband Oppenheim, to live with Ricotti, Oppenheim, who was enormously rich, withdrew all his money from Fenzi's bank; then Camillo gambled away 900,000 francs, so the ruin has been steadily approaching.

I hear it is doubtful whether Emanuele's

wife, Cristina (who was a sister of Camillo's), will be able to claim her fortune, or Evelina Fenzi her fortune of £20,000, which was secured on Rusciano and Monte Abate. Everything depends on whether the mortgages were executed before or after the Bank practically became insolvent.

Evelina talks of going to England; she cannot bear the disgrace that has come on the family.

Her boy Leone, of ten, used to come back from school crying because the other boys used to taunt him with the deeds of his uncle. They used to point at his head and say, "See, the gold that Emanuele stole has got into his hair!" And the Fenzis could hardly show themselves in the streets without risking being insulted by some of those they had ruined.

It is very terrible.

Then there is the ruin of the Borghese, which seems more and more absolute, and now Sciarra and Doria are fighting for their galleries.

The people are crying out for bread, and are starving, and the Government is talking of buying in these private collections, or seizing them, and building galleries and museums to

put them in. And I believe there are heaps of treasures lying unknown and uncared for in the Royal residences in the 100 cities of Italy.

Did you see in the papers how the people at Civita Lavinia and in the Alban Hills have been bivouacking in tubs and casks in the *piazze* of the little towns on account of the earthquakes? It sounds delightfully airy, but yesterday the hills towards Vallombrosa were deep with fresh snow, so I think it must have been premature; still, cask-rent would be cheap as lodgings go. My photography is getting on splendidly. I find I have quite a turn for interiors, which is nice in nasty weather. I should like to do a few inhabited casks, but we haven't had earthquakes yet here.

VIA DEI SERRAGLI 17,
March 31, 1892.

. . . Poor Pussy! This is the very anniversary of her death, so you may imagine how glad I was to get your letter.

I won't write any more on this subject to-day. My mother wrote the other day saying her eyes were better; she is anxious,

though she tried not to be, about Evie, saying she was sure he would not have taken his passage on board the missing steamer *Don*. Still, when there is a doubt, one cannot help being anxious, and anxiety is very bad for her.

She says Gardner has been to St. James's, and reports her rooms all ready for her to inhabit. I am so glad. St. James's will be a constant source of interest and occupation for her, without associations, and every other place has them. The Mote, Eastbourne, and Portland Place were full of recollections of poor Pussy.

Our weather has been very wretched here, and my photography greatly checked, but I did four rather nice views from my old apartment in the Via degli Archibusieri, very dear to me for the sake of old times. . . .

I don't think I shall come over to England before I can possibly help, and if the weather gets finer I may go to Rome for a few days to see my Italian nieces.

The Borghese sale is in full activity. Mrs. Hobson wrote to me from Washington that a friend of hers was wearing the most superb rubies which she had bought from the family. I heard that early in the winter the Princess

had sold even her clothes, and was seen to get out of a second-class carriage at Pisa.

The Duca di Ceri, however, who married Torlonia's heiress, appears to have escaped the family ruin.

I am glad to hear that you have settled about your house as you wish, and I do hope it will be a great comfort and convenience in every way. It is such a thing to have one's own room, and have all one's books and papers about one, and do just what one likes as one likes oneself. How I loved my Archibusieri when I first went there, and rang my own bell without asking leave, and did just what I liked. Afterwards we were so one in our married life that his way was my way, and so I always had my own way.

VIA DEI SERRAGLI 17,
November 23, 1892.

You need never be afraid that I shall find your letters dull; everything you tell me interests me, and now there are so few who know and understand what is interesting.

I had a roughish passage, which made my maid say her prayers, as she thought we must be going down; but then we had bright sun-

shine, which lasted, with a cold wind, for nearly a fortnight. Oh, how delightful to see real blue sky and sun again, and to be home once more, to hear the sweet Italian tongue again, to find oneself in the city of pleasant memories ! I have been out all day, breathing in light and air, and already I feel a different being. I have decided to take on this apartment for another year, not to have the trouble of moving, but to be able to stretch myself thoroughly and rest. The happiness of being at home again, and the feeling that all my household are so pleased to have me again, instead of scuttling away like mice at the sight of a cat ; their one wish seems to be to please me, to have a word of approbation.

I am very sorry about the colony. I am sure Turner was utterly unfit for the post, and to make the plan succeed I fancy Arnold White should have remained on for several years longer, entirely giving up his mind to it.

But I don't think he would be at all the man to work under directors who know less about the colony than he does.

I hope the scheme he is now occupied on will really be a success. If it is, it will be just what he always wished Tennyson to be

the stepping-stones to; and so it will, for every failure at that colony will be invaluable for this great scheme.

Arthur Ellis said Hirsch is so enthusiastic about it, that probably the whole of his enormous fortune will go to it. And then truly Aunt Charlotte's will have been blessed beyond her most sanguine expectations. It is true that this work is for the Jews, but, after all, it is to save thousands and thousands of families from miseries far worse than what her colonists were exposed to. She put hers in the way of gaining their livelihood, and perhaps when you look into their conduct, from Turner and Sister Enid downwards, there will not have been very much to choose between the merits of Jews and Gentiles.

Anyhow, Aunt Charlotte's work will have led to this.

Harvey Pechell turned up the other day with a young Mr. Hamilton Russell. They had come from the lake of Como for a couple of days to see the beauties of Florence. They came and dined with me one evening, and we had a very pleasant time. He asked much after you.

Tonino, my cook, has improved wonder-

fully, and he turns out delightful little dinners; we were four to dinner, and eight in the house besides, and our *spesa* was 34 francs, and you can't think what a nice little dinner it was. Oh, it is such a pleasure to have no drunken cooks and stupid servants, and never to hear, "It is not my place"!

H. L. is going to have Fay at the Mote. Willy writes quite cheerful letters, and all seems going well. I think my stay in England has been of some use in that quarter.

ST. JAMES'S HOUSE,
WEST MALVERN,
September 19, 1893.

I am very sorry to miss your visit here, because it would have been so nice for you to have seen all that has been done, and the progress of the works, which have quite transformed the place. It would have been very interesting, but I hope that both you and Mrs. Denison may be able to come later. But I certainly think, as far as she is concerned, it is a mercy she has not come just now. The weather seems to be breaking up for the equinoctial gales, and to-day there is

a howling wind and driving storms, varied by gleams of sunshine. It would have been very trying for her to have to keep still in the house, and my mother takes such long drives in the open carriage that I expect Mrs. Denison would have been killed with cold if she went, and with dulness if she stayed in the house, unable to join with others.

The house is, or might be, very comfortable, but the servants have a system of ventilation quite their own, leaving the sunblinds down and every door and window open whichever way the wind blows, so you have to go about shutting unexpected windows at every moment. In the evening we come shivering into the aerated drawing-room, and everything is shut up at once, and with an umbrella lamp and six or seven others the heat of the petroleum becomes stifling after an hour or two.

Anyhow, we must meet before I go, and as soon as I have packed my things and sent them off I will do my possible to come or stay, as suits you best. I must give them three weeks' start, and it would be hard if we couldn't combine in that time.

I feel so unglued morally and physically

that I am not fit for anything in the way of amusement, and I am going to give up all my visits. Already at the thoughts of going back I am beginning to revive. But whatever happens, I will do my very best to see you before I leave England, and it is the one thing I look to.

I think it is best that I should go. I think H. L. is not pleased at seeing that this place is impossible for me. It would cost £5,000 a year to keep up, and I am appalled at the abyss of useless expense that she is letting herself be led into. I don't see how it can be stopped now; they say it will cost £10,000 at least to finish the terraces alone, and they won't be much when done. The house will be almost impossible to live in or to sell, except to some enormously rich person, and I cannot bear the idea of so much being wasted for me.

If it is to keep her in health and amusement, and distract her thoughts from worries, and so prolong her life, I don't think it a waste, but not with a view to doing it for me. And I don't want it to be said that I am urging her to do it when there are still others to be provided for.

PALAZZO GUADAGNI,
VIALE PRINCIPE UMBERTO,
FLORENCE.

May 7, 1896.

I had a letter from H. L. to-day written in very good spirits and gracious. She said she had been suffering from rheumatism in the hand, had decided to leave off hot water, and then found she must return to it. Four hours later the pipes burst—said to be phenomenal without a cause. That evening the electric lights were burnt out in the road, and at dinner she was left completely in the dark.

On Tuesday I went up to the Villa Capponi to meet the Archbishop and Mrs. ——. We had known each other in old times as children when we lived next door in Cavendish Square, and she poured out a string of questions. I suppose clergywomen and bishopesses get accustomed to catechizing ignorant children and fools, so they don't feel how funny their questions sound to rational and educated beings! Or, I wonder, am I so different to other people? I live in a state of perpetual surprise at the questions people ask me.

The Archbishopess was bent on my having a companion to live with me, and insisted on

the advantages Lady —— would be to me. I quoted Minny's famous speech, when someone apologized to him for not having been able to get better company to meet him. The best company I know is that of Mr. Charles Ellis! Then they wanted to know if I did not wish to leave the *coro* which I have just erected in one of the rooms, and which is the feature of the apartment to some poor church. I said I thought I would leave it to the future. And eventually they attacked me on the subject of the churches here, and asked whether I did not take a great interest in them, so I said I was sick of the sound of churches, as I was worried out of my life to build them in every place I set my foot in. Mrs. —— talked so much of the enormous riches of our family that I think she must have intended me to build at least a cathedral!

However, she told me a great deal that was very interesting about Tommy, who she had been meeting with his mother at Welbeck, I think, and said he was growing up quite nice-looking, only too much of a gentleman, very nicely dressed, and quite grown-up manners—a great contrast to her own boy, who, though the same age, was very childish. She said

Blanche was looking sad and sorrowful, and though she thought her very pretty the first evening, the next day she thought her very much aged and gone off. On the whole I was glad to see her, though I think it would be well to publish a guide to discreet conversation for the wives of the clergy, and I liked the Archbishop the best of the two.

I am growing to be great friends with Lady Paget. I always thought that as a private person with no duties to perform she would be very delightful, though in a public capacity she seemed to carry out the principle, "*Que le devoir est surtout ce que l'on impose aux autres.*" She has made that villa at Bello Sguardo perfectly ideal—a dream of beauty—and people complain that she has done it with so little expense, which I think such a merit. It is all taste.

The roses here are beginning to be quite lovely, and to-day I must go up to Rusciano to see them, and to the Giardino del Municipio at San Miniato. I went there last year just before the earthquake on May 17, and it was ideal.

Yesterday I had my second afternoon tea, and about sixty people came. It was rather

tiring, as they began to arrive at three, and at a quarter-past seven Lady Elizabeth Bertie, who outstayed the rest, settled herself comfortably down in her armchair to have a quiet talk with me. I asked her to stay to dinner, as I was feeling quite exhausted, having had a headache all the morning, and she remained till ten. I hope she enjoyed herself.

The party seemed to be a great success, and everyone enjoyed themselves. I had intended it to be an intellectual tea, but it ended by being simply a mixed tea.

22, GROSVENOR PLACE,
Tuesday, October, 1897.

I left Eisenach on Monday, and had to stop at Frankfort three days to develop and dry my last plates; then I went on to Cologne on Friday and left on Saturday night, arriving here on Sunday afternoon. We had a horribly rough passage; it left off pouring just before we got to Calais, and the wind dried the decks nicely, but not for long, as we were constantly shipping heavy seas, and the vessel pitched so that I could not even try to rescue my photograph-box, though I could see the waves breaking over it. The shaking of the railway

afterwards finished me, and yesterday I was in bed all day with one of the worse headaches I have had for weeks. I got a chill when I was at Weimar, which went to my throat and chest, owing to the horrible weather we had there, but I got over it in five days, and then the weather changed, the third day after I got to Eisenach, and became quite lovely. My visit to my Grand Duke was a complete success. I was received with almost royal honours at the Wartburg. He sent his carriage for me as far as the road went, and then a *chaise à porteurs* was waiting for me; one of his gentlemen came to meet me also, and as we approached the Schloss the guard all turned out and saluted, and the Grand Duke himself and his suite came to meet me at the drawbridge. He showed me over the whole of the castle himself, and all the things that are not generally shown, and then he accompanied me back to the carriage himself with all the suite. As he came afterwards every day to see me, and his visits grew longer and longer, I think we made a mutually favourable impression on each other. I know I am perfectly enchanted with him, and we agreed that it had been quite a little romance,

our meeting so for the first time after corresponding for twenty-two years. When he took leave of me the day I left he said I must permit him to transfer to me the friendship he had felt for my Duca; it seemed to him as if he had known me for two centuries, and he promised to come and see me at Florence in February, and ask me for a cup of tea.

As soon as I am re-established I must go and have my negatives printed. I have promised to send him a collection and also to Empress Frederick, and I think I have some very nice ones among my lot.

PALAZZO GUADAGNI,
PORTA AL PRATO,
January 29, 1900.

A few days back I sent you one of the first copies of my Duca's "Letters to Carlo Troja," by the Libraio Oltschi. It is not much of a publication, but it is the first of a series of his letters. The next is to be a new edition of his "Tavole," with the corrections by Fornaciari (which were introduced contrary to his expressed opinion) suppressed, and another introduction written by Passerini. The monks of

Monte Cassino had written to propose making these alterations in the great edition they were bringing out for the use of schools, and he absolutely refused, saying that if they altered his work it was not to be brought out under his name. Fornaciari, however, did introduce these alterations against my wishes when he brought out the small edition after my Duca's death.

My Dante conferences are promising to be a great success. All the best professors offer their services, and artists vie with each other for our decorations, which they also offer gratuitously. We are thinking of acquiring the Arte della Lana as the seat of the Societa Dantesca. We believe the Government will give it to us, only we shall have to restore it. I have given another 1,000 lire to assure my Fondazione Michel Angelo Caetani as a befitting memorial to him, and I think that has given the impulse that was required. It is very interesting working with so many clever and intelligent men, who have taken up the work with their whole hearts, and they take a pride in our society surpassing that of any other city in Italy—and so it ought to, in Dante's own city. From eighty *soci* last year we have now

increased to 500, and a known professor will draw an audience of 2,000 people, which is more than our *sala* can hold.

PALAZZO GUADAGNI,
February 19, 1900.

I am sending you a *Nazione* to-day.* On second thoughts it would, perhaps, be simpler to cut out my conference and send it in the letter. It was a very great surprise to me, as I was not at all prepared for such a demonstration. The *sala* was crowded. It was a Sunday, and I rather think my *comitate* knew it was to be, as they all flocked in great numbers, and I was quite upset at the general applause that saluted the allusion to my Duca, and still more to myself, as I am not used to being publicly applauded ; and, after all, it is not I who have the merit, but all those who have worked with me and infused a soul into the *astuccio*.

I am expecting Fay next week, and I do hope the weather will take a turn for the better. We have had some pleasant sunshine to-day, with a fierce wind, which I hope will carry away the infection of this terrible influ-

* See Appendix.

enza ; but hardly a house that I know has been unvisited, and generally all the households down at the same time.

I hear that Mrs. Scott is delighted at Cinthy Bentinck's marriage to Mr. Jessup. He is a very rich American banker, I believe, has a lovely château near Lucerne, and will have a palace at Rome later. He had two children by his first wife, one of Lady Ulick More's daughters, who was very musical.

Giovannella Caetani's marriage to Baron Grenier came off on Sunday, I believe. It does not please the family, I understand, but she had set her heart on it, and so it had to be. He is "*d'une bonne famille bourgeoise de Gand*"—good-looking and sporting. He has written a book about horses. But it is hardly an alliance one could have wished for her.

What a relief this good news at last about Lord Roberts and Kimberley is ! The foreign Press was too disgusting, but we may hope they will change their tone a little now, and find that we still have Generals.

VILLA DRESCHER,

HOMBURG VOR DER HOHE,

August 7, 1900.

I have been here just a week. I came very slowly from Florence, I felt so weak and done up. I stopped at Trent for three days — it was too hot to make excursions, as I should have liked to have done—then on to Innspruck. All the hotels crowded to overflowing with Ammergauists. I had almost decided to give up all thoughts of going there, when, on arriving at Munich, I was told I could have excellent places, so I decided to go with Steiner. We were lodged in the house of the Apostle Simon—rooms small, but apparently clean, only the sanitary arrangements were most deficient, and I decided to leave directly after the play. There was a fearful storm, which burst just at the end—sheets of rain—but the performers continued unmoved, and the effect of the thunder, lightning, and visible darkness during the scenes of the crucifixion was most striking. Altogether I think it was quite worth going to see, especially as, humanly speaking, I shall be in *paradiso* before the next performance in ten years' time! I stopped two or three days at Nuremburg and

then at Frankfurt, and on Tuesday came over to settle here. I think the waters are already doing me good, though the weather has been most stormy and chilly; we have gone into thick winter things again. I think so much of you at every turn. You and Barbara were here the last time I was, and everything reminds me of you. Of course, the news of the murder of our King and the death of the Duke of Coburg, which I heard at Frankfurt, produced a great impression. The young King has great opportunities before him, if he knows how to avail himself of them, and Queen Margherita was very fond of the young Queen, so I think that will help them very much. She was so popular and so respected, and we may really, I think, hope now for something like a respectable and moral Court, for the young Royalties are perfectly devoted to each other. I have heard much good of both, and, at all events, we may hope.

I have heard no news of the Italian Legation since I left Trent, when there were hopes the members might have escaped. Poor Livio !* I was so fond of that boy, and he was

* Don Livio Caetani was attached to the Italian Embassy at Pekin, and was there during the Boxer rising. It was feared that he had been killed.

rarely gifted. I heard the parents were in the greatest grief about him.

There are a few people here that I know. The Duke of Cambridge has just arrived, and I am told the Prince of Wales's rooms are engaged at Ritter's Hotel, which will probably bring an influx of English. The English church was very crowded on Sunday, and the Empress Frederick came over to a memorial service on Saturday for the Duke of Coburg. They say she is very ill—people talk of cancer—with little hope. . . .

Now I must end. So strange, when my head was so full of you and Barbara and Nelly, to get your letter from Tabley.

FRANKFURTER HOF,
FRANKFURT,

September 27, 1900.

Just before leaving Frankfurt I have half an hour to spare, and so send you a few lines. . . .

I had an ideal visit at Eisenach. The Grand Duke had both his daughters staying with him, the Duchess of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, Princess Reuss, her husband and daughter, the little Grand Duke (the grandson of my Duke), and their respective suites.

I was there the inside of a week, and dined four times at the Schloss. I utterly declined lunch, but twice went up to photograph the family, and also to the *Gottesdienst* on Sunday, which was ideal: the Chapel of St. Elizabeth, with a carpet of roses, and the service admirably conducted, with an invisible choir. They sang one of the old Troubadour hymns, and then Luther's "Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott." It was too beautiful. And the last day when I dined there there was the most magnificent thunderstorm. There is the last bit of the road which is not carriageable, so I was carried down on a chair by the light of the continued flashes of lightning and rolling thunder, and the deluge burst just as I got into the carriage. It was simply sublime, and no words can say how good everybody was to me.

My Grand Duke is, I am sorry to say, looking much aged, and no longer, since he had that stroke last autumn, as active as he used to be, but still most charming. I thought him looking very tired occasionally in the evening. But I am so pleased to have seen him again, and no words can say how nice he was to me, and so were they all. It was a

settimana indimenticabile, and I feel all the better for it—better than all my cure at Hom-burg.

PALAZZO GUADAGNI,
FLORENCE,

January 14, 1901.

My *gita* at Rome was most satisfactory till the last week, when the news came of my poor Grand Duke's illness. His daughter-in-law was at Rome, and I heard from her the latest news, and when I came back here on the 3rd I heard all details from the Kaufmanns, who are from Weimar, and in constant communication with the Court. He seems to have got a chill *auf der Jagd*. On the 22nd he paid an evening visit to their friends—the daughter of an old official at Court—with a bad cold and cough, and evidently very feverish. On the 23rd he took to his bed, and then there were alternations of hope and fear. Three times all the family and Court officials were collected around his bed, in the expectation of the end, and twice he rallied, and was so surprised to see them all there. Then there was a better account on the 5th, and we hoped his iron will would carry him through, but at four

in the afternoon he became unconscious from weakness of the heart, and passed quietly away with no suffering. His daughter, the Duchess of Mecklenburg, was with him ; one of his last outings was to fetch her from the station. Princess Reuss was ill at Corfu, unable to travel ; also the Hereditary Grand Duchess, who was at Rome. They say his loss will be felt beyond words at Weimar. The present Grand Duke is not very satisfactory, neither clever, nor gracious, like his grandfather. To me I can't say what it is—this severing of the last link with my Duca's memory. I have photographs of him from 1852 with *dedicas*, and I valued the friendship he continued to me for my husband's sake more than words can say. He took such an interest in all I did for my Duca's memory. I can't tell you how I miss him at every moment, or how glad I was to have paid that happy visit to the Wartburg. I see in the accounts of the funeral that when the coffin was lowered into the vault, they chanted that hymn I heard at the Wartburg, "Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott." I shall never hear it without thinking of him.

TABLEY HOUSE,
KNUTSFORD,

September 3, 1902.

I came here yesterday, and write a few lines to you in haste to say that I sent you by my servant, Holmes, to Chesham Place, the first volume of the "Epistolario."

The edition is strictly private, and limited to 300 copies.

It is not satisfactory to me, as if the proof-sheets could have been sent to me altogether, I should have omitted various portions and corrected others. But Passerini dawdled on; at first he was ill, his children also, so it was put off and off. Then I was ill in my turn, so it was only at the last moment, before I left Florence in June, that a few proof-sheets of the letters to Cheney were sent me full of errors, which I corrected as best I could without the originals.

Then some of Circourts were sent me in London, of which, I confess, without the originals, I could make neither head nor tail. I was kept in London by the purchase of the house in Grosvenor Place till December 11, and was only a few days in Florence before I left for Egypt. So I had little or nothing to

do with the editing, and, in fact, had no idea that these letters would take so much space. I expected the Dantesque correspondence to take a much larger proportion. But Passerini reserved that for the second volume, and, I suppose, wanted to make a handsome volume of the rest.

So I desired it to be reserved for private circulation entirely, and when I am able to see what people think of it, we may possibly decide on a second edition for the public, with many alterations and more condensed.

I am afraid I may have difficulties with Onorato.

Leone said to me he expected his father would be much displeased by the publication, and he could not say what he would say or do. I wrote that I could not expect he would be pleased at the blame bestowed on his political friends, but that he must remember that although diametrically opposed to his father on every point of politics, religion, and taste, there never was a more passionate love than that which my husband bore to his son in spite of differences of opinion.

That this edition is strictly private, and that I shall be very glad to know all Leone's

criticisms on it, and then, if ever we give a second edition to the public, we can take them into consideration.

There were especially two letters that Leone objected to—17 and 18—although he said he agreed with every word of them, but he thought they might possibly provoke disagreeable articles from the scoundrels that write for the anarchical papers! and for that reason would suggest my waiting another fifty or a hundred years before publishing the book, although he admitted it was of the greatest interest, and might be most useful in the future.

I am asking the opinion of people whose judgment I can rely on what they think of the book, and I shall be guided by that in distributing my copies.

HOTEL BRISTOL,

BOZEN TIROL,

September 30, 1904.

I feel sure you will like to hear something about me. I have been thinking so much of you since I have been here, and your expedition to the Carer See with Barbara Leighton after Homburg, and I wondered whether it was at

this hotel that you put up on your way. This is a very comfortable hotel; the breakfast is good, but the rest of the food very bad. I have a lovely view of the Rosengarten and the Earth Pyramids from my window, but since the second day of my stay here it has done nothing but rain, and I have not seen a proper rose-coloured sunset yet, though I have been here a week to-day.

To-morrow evening I leave for Florence, and it is high time, for I am far from well, and shall have to put myself at once under a doctor's care, if I can find one at Florence on arriving. Gastein was not a success on the whole. I arrived there very tired, though I broke the journey at Zurich and Innspruck, so I could not begin the baths for the first ten days, and after I had taken about seven had to discontinue them. The doctor was an idiot, and only thought how much he could charge.

The whole system at Gastein is to charge the *theure* (not the *liebe Gäste*) as much as they think they ought to be able to pay. The Emperor of Austria had to pay an hotel bill of £2,000 for a week's stay, and said he would never go back again, and the King of Roumania in proportion. They wanted to put

me in the same category, but I absolutely refused. However, I got some comfortable rooms at the Gasteiner Hof after ten days, and the air, when it was fine, was really enchanting, and did me worlds of good. I could take long walks, and felt a wish to hold myself upright again. Unluckily the second week it grew bad, we had snow and pouring rain, and I only occasionally got out. I stayed about a month, and then, as all the hotels were closing, went on to Salzburg. The barometer was steadily going up, and the rain coming down as steadily, so I decided to give up all my intended expeditions and turn homewards.

I therefore wrote to ask if my house would be ready for me by the last week in September. My *guarda roba* wrote that my letter arrived like a bolt from the blue. All my Venetian shutters were to have been painted in the summer, and those for fifteen windows made new as they were falling to pieces, and nothing had been done since I left in June. However, they set to work in good earnest. I had left for Innspruck in very cold weather, and they gave me an unaired bed in the new part of the hotel. We had arrived at ten at night, and I was so cold I could not sleep for hours. I think

that must have brought on a fresh attack of eczema in my arms, which has been getting worse and worse. Then there was the general strike in Italy, and I was strongly recommended, both by my banker and hotel-keeper, not to go till it was over. Newspapers and telegrams stopped, no gas lighted, no carriages at the stations, no porters, everything out of gear, so I waited, and came on here. There had been riots at Milan and Genoa, and killed and wounded in the streets; troubles at Prato and Pistoja and Bologna, so I thought I would wait till the strike was over, and the smell of paint had had time to dissipate.

But I am getting troubled about this complaint, and want to put myself into the hands of a good doctor. My maid, who has studied for the hospitals in Switzerland, says that she thinks there is nothing dangerous in my illness so far, but that it requires a good doctor to look after it, and I am quite of her opinion. She knows a good deal, but I don't feel unlimited confidence in her; she is very young and positive, and her opinions on subjects that I know about are as startling as they are ignorant. Fools boldly rush where angels fear to tread.

But if it had not been for this eczema I should have enjoyed my trip. Now I yearn to be at home again, though I think in some respects that I am stronger.

I must end this long story, craving your indulgence.

PALAZZO GUADAGNI,
PORTA AL PRATO,
January 8, 1905.

I don't know whether I ever thanked you for your most kind offer of coming out to take care of me. I have been having a very bad time of it, and I don't think I am much better, though I always hope. My letters are put away out of my reach, and I can't get at them, and have no one who can write in English.

It is terrible, and I suffer the pangs of Tantalus, seeing all the things I want just out of my reach. If I could only get up and sit in an armchair for a few hours I could do so much, but I can't manage writing in bed.

Thanks so very much for offering to come. In three or four months I should be delighted, if I could get about at all; it would be the greatest pleasure. Now it is simply impossible. The house in this cold cannot be properly

warmed, and an English nurse would be quite out of the question.

I have a very good upper housemaid, or *guarda roba*, who does everything for me, a good night-nurse, and Marietta, who has had a certain medical education, and two *professori*, who say the disease must take its course.

Fay is coming to me next month, as late, I said, as she could. She is going to the Charles Ellis's at Hyères first.

I think I shall be able to have her. She can have the carriages and horses too, which will make her independent.

The Kaufmanns wanted her to stay with them, and, if they repeat the invitation, I shall be very glad if she accepts.

The daughter made a great marriage last year to a Count Freuberg Holzen. They wanted Fay to be bridesmaid, and then afterwards to go on a visit to Schloss Holzen, which is magnificent.

I think all this may be nice for Fay, and a novelty, and if there is anything that she don't like, which I think possible, as they are not quite in my set here, she can always come back to me. But I think she has so many

friends here that she will have a pleasant time.

I cannot write more to-day, only I must repeat that though nothing could give me greater pleasure than a visit from you if I were fit for it, just now I should worry my remaining life out if you came, and I thought you had not everything to make you comfortable.

PALAZZO GUADAGNI,
March 29, 1906.

Just a few lines, written with great difficulty, to say how sorry I am for the cause of your postponed journey, but otherwise I think it is rather lucky that you had to put it off. The weather has been vile; so much snow and storms and rain, little or no sunshine, and every house with its victims to influenza or pneumonia.

By the time you come here I hope to be able to walk a few steps, and perhaps to take you out driving.

But it has been a weary, dreary eighteen months for me.

You will be sorry to hear that we have had very bad accounts of Minny. They say it is

heart, with very little hope of recovery. I feel it all the more as he had been taking such an interest in my case. But I still hope.

Now I can only add best wishes for your prompt and complete recovery. My hands hurt me so terribly I can write no more. I generally have to be flat on my back on my chaise longue, but this is the first time I have sat up to write.

Ever yours most affectionately,

HARRIET G. CAETANI.

APPENDIX

PER IL VI CENTENARIO DAL PRIORATO DI DANTE.

OGGI, nella sala dantesca in Or San Michele ebbe luogo la annunciata inaugurazione della lapide, che ricorda alcune benemerenze della duchessa, donna E. Caetani di Sermoneta.

La lapide, apposta per deliberazione della Commissione esecutiva e del Comitato centrale reca la seguente iscrizione :

“La Società Dantesca italiana qui scrive il nome di Enrichetta Caetani duchessa di Sermoneta che la memoria del consorte per nobili studi e civili virtù benemerito degnamente onorava con generosa largizione a perpetuare in Firenze la rinnovata lettura della Divina Commedia.

XV giugno MCM

Sesto Centenario del Priorato di Dante.”

La sala era affollata.

Il Sindaco, marchese Torrigiani, lesse un elevatissimo discorso.

La duchessa di Sermoneta, che era presente, fu molto applaudita ed ebbe ripetute, cordiali dimostrazioni di simpatia.

Diamo il testo del discorso del Sindaco, accolto con grandi applausi :

SIGNORE E SIGNORI,

Volgono oggi appunto seicento anni dal giorno che Dante Alighieri fu eletto dei Priori della città pel sesto di Porta a San Piero, e l'ufficio che durò a lui e a'suoi compagni nel Priorato pel bimestre fino al 15 di agosto dovè costargli l'amarezza dell'esilio, la vita travagliata ed errabonda, la confisca dei beni, il più acuto dolore dell'anima, quello di non poter mai fluchè visse rivedere il suo bei San Giovanni, e ritornare cittadino nell'ovile ove dormi agnello.

Oggi, a distanza di sei secoli, vogliam celebrare il Priorato di Dante, l'onore riserbato a Firenze nell'averlo suo magistrato, la gloria che egli con gratitudine di figlio irradiò sulla madre inconsapevole, quasi perfida noverca; vogliamo ricordare la prima radice di quell'esilio dove l'animo e il genio del Poeta si temprarono nel dolore alle immortali altezze della Visione sovrumana. Onde noi dobbiamo insieme esser dolenti e superbi che tante sventure acuissero gli strali del Poeta, poichè, come dice il Carlyle, "se tutto gli fosse andato a seconda, se i cittadini della sua Firenze gli avesser fatto accoglienze affettuose, il mondo non avrebbe udito una delle parole più alte che sian mai state dette o cantate. Firenze avrebbe avuto un prosperoso gonfaloniere di più, ma la gran voce di Dante non avrebbe rotto il silenzio di dieci secoli muti, e gli altri secoli che aspettavano ascoltando non avrebbero ora una *Divina Commedia*."

L'idea di questa onoranza che avrà un solenne oratore, Isidoro Del Lungo, il quale domenica, nel salone dei Cinquecento, parlerà a nome del Comune, della Società Dantesca Italiana e della Società Dante Alighieri, tre enti distinti che ora insieme congiunge il culto del divino poeta; l'idea di ricordare questo memorabile giorno in cui Dante ebbe dal popolo il supremo ufficio cittadino, venne primamente alla Commissione esecutiva fiorentina della Società Dantesca italiana e fu poi

approvata dal Comitato centrale della Dantesca, accolta con grande favore dall'illustre Presidente della Dante Alighieri, e infine dalla Giunta e dal Consiglio Comunale che se la fecero propria.

Or non è senza grande soddisfazione per noi il vedere come da questa sala mosse l'anno scorso la prima favilla che accese per tutta l'Italia così gran fuoco d'entusiasmo dantesco ; tanto che in quest'anno, indicato come quello della Visione, per cura del Governo si promossero nelle scuole esercitazioni letterarie, gare e discorsi, e in ogni parte d'Italia il grande nome augurale ebbe suffragio non infecondo di orazioni e di studi.

Questa Tribuna, piantata qui nel cuore di Firenze, nella loggia che servì alle granaglie, fu come ventilabro da cui si sparse in tutte le terre d'Italia il buon seme dantesco. Perciò noi dobbiamo esser grati a quanti col consiglio e coll'opera ci confortarono alla nobile impresa, ai lettori di Dante che qui vennero come in pellegrinaggio devoto, alla Commissione che ordinò queste letture, alle Patronesse che vollero auspicarle e agli uditori che le hanno seguite con crescente desiderio, e attenzione.

Ma un nome è sovra tutti degnissimo di ricordanza fra quelli dei più benemeriti, un nome caro che già corre sulle labbra di tutti, nè avverrà che il ricordo se ne cancelli finché non si spenga il culto di Dante. Enrichetta Caetani duchessa di Sermoneta ha legato il suo nome a questa "Lectura Dantis" che si è qui rinnovata secondo l'antica tradizione.

La gentildonna inglese, fattasi italiana di affetti e di studi, unendosi al liberale patrizio romano, ha voluto aggiungere un altro anello a quell'aurea catena onde Elisabetta Barrett-Browning congiungeva l'Italia all'Inghilterra, cioè al paese dove Dante ha ancora onore di studi e di culto fervente ; a quella terra ospitale dove Ugo Foscolo scriveva per un editore inglese il mirabile Discorso sul Testo della Commedia di Dante, geniale fondamento agli studi critici a lui contrastati dall'esilio ; dove Antonio Panizzi pubblicava per un mecenate la

principesca riproduzione delle quattro prime stampe della Commedia, a quella terra donde nei fratelli d'oltre oceano, messe l'amore per gli studi danteschi per cui, negli Stati Uniti d'America si raccolgono ora come in un tempio tutti gli scritti relativi al Poeta, con imitabile esempio di diligenza e di devozione,

Signore e Signori, La Società dantesca italiana con unanime plauso deliberava che in questa Sala di Dante si ponesse un ricordo alla Duchessa di Sermoneta e che con questa onoranza, compiendosi oggi la lettura della prima cantica del divino poema, si preludesse alla solenne commemorazione del Priorato ai Dante.

Ed ora, gentile Duchessa, che oggi pure ci avete, come di consueto, onorati della vostra presenza, consentite, che a malgrado di quella singolare modestia onde siete adorna, io, in nome della Società, inauguri pubblicamente al cospetto vostro questo ricordo delle benemerenze da voi acquistate.

Erano presenti le signore patronesse della Commissione fiorentina per la commemorazione del Priorato, i componenti la Commissione fiorentina, il Consiglio direttivo della Società Dantesca italiana.

Il prof. Pasquale Papa lesse il canto XXV dell'*Inferno*.

Riparleremo della bella lettura, che ebbe un vero successo.

IN SANTA CROCE.

Stamani il Sindaco, la Giunta, la Commissione fiorentina per la commemorazione del Priorato, le signore Patronesse: duchessa di Sermoneta, signora M. Giarrè-Billi, signora C. Pozzolini-Siciliani, i rappresentanti della Società Dantesca e della Società Dante Alighieri si recavano in Santa Croce a porre una corona sul monumento del sommo poeta.

La corona fu deposta sulla tomba da due uscieri del Comune, in alta uniforme.

Molta gente si è adunata nella Chiesa.

GLI STENDARDI.

Il Comune di Roma ha inviato spontaneamente uno stendardo da aggiungersi a quelli delle città italiane, che eran già custoditi in Palazzo Vecchio e che furono inviati per il Centenario di Dante nel 1865.

Furon pure inviati gli stendardi dai comuni di Napoli e di Torino.

Tutti gli stendardi sono stati disposti in trofei nella sala dei Cinquecento.

Manca lo stendardo di Palermo che arriverà fra giorni.

— E'stato pubblicato un elegantissimo opuscolo, intitolato: "La lettura di Dante in Or San Michele e la fondazione Michelangelo Caetani di Sermoneta. Notizie compilate dalla Commissione esecutiva fiorentina della Società dantesca italiana."

Fu inviato al Sindaco, senatore Torrigiani, il seguente telegramma da Modena:

"Oratore Tommaso Casini commemorandosi nel Teatro del Comune, in cospetto del popolo modenese sesto centenario Priorato Dante questo Comitato Società Dante Alighieri promotore altissima festa civile manda voi primo magistrato città natale Poeta reverente saluto eco di Modena acclamante massimo assertore unità gran madre Italia.

"Presidente,

"MENAFOGLIO."

Il Sindaco di Firenze rispose :

“ Con lieto e grato animo ricevo comunicazione e ricambio saluto, mentre Firenze preparasi commemorare centenario Priorato Dante e fondazione Palazzo del Popolo. Alla città del massimo storico Muratori ben si addiceva commemorare massimo Poeta Italia nostra. Aggiungo nostre congratulazioni, anche come Presidente Società Dantesca italiana, illustre dantista Casini, oratore degno.”

Targioni dott. Edoardo, Taruffi comm. generale Dante ed a Sindaci i signori : Cosci cav. Cesare, Cosimini Vincenzo, Ponticelli ing. Alfredo, si sciolse facendo voti perchè presto possa essere aperto un refettorio anche nel quartiere di S. Frediano.

“ CRONACA DI FIRENZE,” 15 GIUGNO.

NELLA SALA DI DANTE.

LA LETTURA DEL PROF. A. BERTOLDI.

Si erano oggi raccolti, nella grandiosa aula di Orsanmichele, gli uditori e le ascoltatrici in immensa folla, richiamata dalle attrattive del Canto XIX dell'*Inferno*, che è certo fra i più vigorosi, i più fieri del divino poema.

Alla singolare caratteristica del canto si aggiungeva, per invogliare gli studiosi a recarsi nello storico edificio, la nota valentia del professore di letteratura nel nostro Liceo Galileo.

Il prof. A. Bertoldi, salutato da fervido plauso, ha innanzi tutto, messo in chiaro come Dante ponesse la causa della corruzione di tutti “ nella corruzione degli alti sacerdoti, avidi di terra e peltro, mercatori e quindi adulteratori delle sacre cose.”

Osservava che il XIX “è altissimo canto di odio e di vendetta.” Ma qui pure, in fondo, sono “tratte da amor le corde della sferza.”

Accanto all'ira implacabile e naturale per Bonifacio e per Clemente, vive e palpita l'anima del cittadino integerrimo, il quale si addolora dei mali che provengono dalla lotta, anzi dalla confusione dei due poteri nell'ordine civile; del rigido cattolico che si rattrista delle sventure che l'avarizia e la cupidigia dei “lupi rapaci in vestito di pastori” inducono nell'ordine morale del mondo.

Il poeta, soggiungeva il prof. Bertoldi, forte della parola evangelica, che non ad avarizia ma dovrebbe portare, come tanti portò, ad atti della più illuminata e sublime carità, è in realtà e si sente maestro.

Nel canto XIX si condanna ripetutamente il civile dominio della Chiesa, come vera e propria sovranità temporale.

Dopo aver fatto alcune erudite considerazioni sul concetto che il divino poema si era formato dei rapporti fra le due potestà, lo strenuo lettore affermava:

“La idea politica di Dante, intimamente legata all'idea religiosa è di tal vastità e grandezza che ad altri potrebbe sembrare . . . ‘mentre perfezione di tempi vegna,’ più che una larva del passato, un'ideale, per certi aspetti dell'avvenire. . . .”

Terminato l'esordio molto ammirevole per altezza di pensiero, il prof. Bertoldi imprendeva un acuto esame delle varie parti del mirabile canto.

Rilevava che la pena inflitta ai sacerdoti simoniaci era conveniente e giusta, quant'altra mai, e bene appropriata ai fini palesi e nascosti del sommo cantore.

L'idea di "imborsare" i trafficanti delle cose sacre fu tolta da Alberico.

Gregorio VII., mentre era tuttavia cardinale, narrò, in una sua predica tenuta in Arezzo alla presenza del papa Niccolò II., una visione avuta da un monaco, e narrata da Pier Damiano, dalla quale Dante desunse gli elementi costitutivi della pena immaginata per la terza bolgia dell'ottavo cerchio.

Si soffermava il diligente lettore nel commento dei versi che paragonano i pozzetti dove erano rinchiusi i simoniaci con quelli del "bel San Giovanni."

Quindi, dalla parte espositiva passava a quella più viva, alla scena ingegnosa e potente, ideata dalla passione politica dell'Alighieri, per assegnare non solo a Bonifacio VIII., ma anche a Clemente V., un posto nell'Inferno.

Avvertiva che Dante pose quattro papi fra i condannati alle pene infernali, e molti altri, non nominati, fra gli avari dei 4° cerchio e fra i simoniaci: due nel Purgatorio, fra gli avari, Adriano V. e Martino IV., ed uno solo direttamente, oltre San Pietro, in Paradiso, ma col suo nome personale, e non già con quello pontificale.

Dai rapidi cenni della vita di Niccolò III. prof. Bertoldi desunse che, per quanto severa, non fu certo ingiusta la pena assegnatagli.

Al momento poi di parlare di Bonifacio VIII., l'oratore così diceva:

E qui, prima di proceder oltre, non posso io, non potete voi, o signori, non rivolgere, almeno un istante, il pensiero memore e reverente a un altro Caetani, a quell'austero e pio Michelangelo di Sermoneta, che nella regione degli spiriti giova supporre sia stato già tardo, ma pur sempre degno e gradito intermediario di pace tra il grande e superbo pontefice di sua stirpe e il

poeta, più che suo studio, sua cura perenne, suo culto : come è certo che da nessuno meglio che da lui potevasi intitolare la rinnovata istituzione di questa bene accettata lettura del *magno volume*, che tutte le genti hanno salutato, che tutte le genti saluteranno divino. E al caro nome di lui naturalmente s'accoppia, nel nostro pensiero, quello della Gentile che gli fu nobilissima Consorte, a cui è giusto e doveroso che si rinnovino oggi quelle grazie e si confermino quei plausi, che già le tributò, nella prima delle nostre adunanze, l'illustre e onorando Magistrato che sta così degnamente a capo del Comune fiorentino e della Società Dantesca Italiana ; poichè, massime in causa della principesca liberalità di lei che segue l'esempio degli avi, il Comitato promotore e ordinatore di queste intellettuali riunioni, tanto benemerito di Firenze e dell'Italia, può e deve ripetere, in suone di trionfo, le solenni ammonitri ei parole

“ Onorate l'altissimo poeta.

L'ombra sua torna ch'era dipartita.”

Applausi concordi, fragorosi, insistenti risuonarono nell'aula ; e gran parte dell'uditorio si levò in piedi, per atto di omaggio alla illustre vedova del patrizio romano, la quale restò profondamente commossa per la rinnovata attestazione della gratitudine dovuta alla sua munificente opera per lo studio di Dante.

Del papa di casa Caetani, il lettore fedelmente ritrasse l'indole e le colpe, accennando pure alle sue continue mene politiche per impadronirsi di Firenze e di tutta la Toscana, come hanno provato documenti pubblicati dal compianto Guido Levi, dell'Archivio di Stato romano, e il chiarissimo Prof. Isidoro Del Lungo.

Negava il prof. Bertoldi che Dante, nel giudicare e condannare Bonifacio VIII., abbia seguito un criterio affatto soggettivo.

Non meno severo fu l'Alighieri contro Clemente V.

E il lettore faceva chiaramente risaltare come l'inflessibile poeta usasse, nelle sue invettive, contro tutti i simoniaci le allusioni bibliche, per corpirli con le loro armi.

Concludendo, il prof. Bertoldi ha splendidamente compendiato il carattere del XIX canto, in cui vi è tanto sapere, unito all'arte sovrana ed alla ricchezza portentosa dell'ideale.

L'uditorio che aveva più volte fatto plauso all'erudito ed elegante oratore, lo acclamò alla fine, con grande calore.

E, a cominciare dall'on, Sindaco, tutti i più autorevoli e competenti ascoltatori si congratularono col forte letterato emiliano.

THE END



